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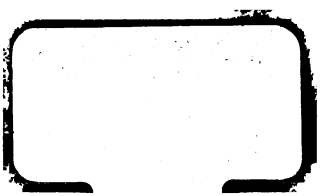

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TRAVELS

IN

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TRAVELS

IN

SOUTH AMERICA,

DURING

THE YEARS 1801, 1802, 1803, AND 1804;

CONTAINING

A DESCRIPTION OF THE CAPTAIN-GENERALSHIP OF CARACCAS, AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE DISCOVERY, CONQUEST, TOPOGRAPHY, LEGISLATURE, COMMERCE, FINANCE, AND NATURAL PRODUCTIONS OF THE COUNTRY;

WITH A

VIEW OF THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

OF THE

SPANIARDS AND THE NATIVE INDIANS.

BY F. DEPONS,

LATE AGENT TO THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AT CARACCAS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Commercial System of Spain with regard to its Colonies, and Commerce of the Eastern Part of Terra-Firma.

First commercial relations between Spain and her colonies—Establishment of the French in America, and their colonial system—Causes which prevented Spain from pursuing the same system—First relations of Venezuela with Spain—Contraband commerce of Holland—Fruitless attempts of the Spanish commerce at competition—Company of Guipuscoa—Wise conditions of that concession—Exclusive commerce—Modifications—Operations of the company—Injurious alteration of system—Freedom of commerce—Commercial revolution that succeeded—Opening the ports of America to commerce with Spain, and wise discrimination—Politic and fiscal bases of the Spanish customs—Conditions regulating the commerce of Spanish America—Partition of commerce in the ports of Terra-Firma—Profits of the Spanish merchant—Management of cargoes—Importations by the commerce of the mother country—Exportations—Purchase of produce—Quality of the produce of Terra-Firma—Their price—Freight of produce to Spain—Insurance—Reciprocal commerce of the Spanish possessions—Cash in circulation—Commerce with foreign colonies—Commerce in animals—Exportation of produce to foreign colonies defended—Momentary opening of the ports to foreigners—Revocation of this measure—Inactivity of the Spanish marine in the Antilles—Opening of the ports anew to foreigners—Commerce with enemies—Contraband trade—With Jamaica—With Curaçao—With Trinidad—With Surinam—Number employed in the Contraband trade—Manner of effecting it—Merchandize suited to the Spaniards—Retail dealers—Consulate—Conditions of eligibility—Appointments—Revenue—Competence—Form of procedure—Deputies of the consulate—Assembly of the consulate—Its privileges—Statement of duties of entrance, departure, &c.

First commercial Relations between Spain and her Colonies.

WHATEVER may have been the inducements which conducted Columbus to America, it is certain that the qualities of those productions which nature has ex-

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clusively granted to the torrid zone, was far from entering into his calculations. During a long time, America was not esteemed, either by that great man or his successors, except for the richness and abundance of its metals. Spain, though much more enlightened at the present day, and furnished with the example of other nations, who also possess colonies, does not yet esteem her own but in proportion to the gold and silver obtained from their mines. The most fertile soil, which promises to the cultivator periodical and inexhaustible riches, is regarded by the Spaniard with indifference, when compared with a sterile and mountainous tract, covered with solid rocks of schistus or granite—the signs, though not infallible, of a mine. That region in which the land yields nothing except from culvitation, envies the lot of that in which excavations have been attended with some success. In short, men become planters only because they are unable to become miners.

This preference given to metals over commercial produce, has deprived Spain of the obvious and lucrative exchange of necessary articles, which the difference of productions between the old and new continent presented. Spain might render all the nations of Europe tributary, for the productions of the torrid zone, as America already was for those of Europe. But, during more than a hundred and fifty years, in which she had exclusive possession of America, nothing was seen to arrive in Europe, from that continent, but gold and silver.

Fate ordained, that in the same epoch, when Spain

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laid the foundation of her sovereignty in America, she should experience at home, a revolution injurious to the arts, and to the new relations she had formed. The expulsion of the Moors, and the emigration of national mechanics, on whom fell the weight of those taxes formerly paid by the Moors, occasioned the ruin of manufactures. Government did not perceive, or appeared not to perceive, the wound given to the state; because the money furnished by America enabled her to purchase from abroad, those articles which were no longer produced within the realm.

In the mean time, all Europe envied the wealth derived by Spain from her American possessions. Imagination, ever apt to exaggerate the wonderful, depicted these distant countries, as filled with sources of gold and silver, where avarice might be satiated, without the slightest labour or least delay. Hardy, enterprising, and ambitious men, did not hesitate to detach themselves from their respective nations, of which they were the refuse with respect to their morals, but the select in regard to their intrepidity:—they turned their attention to these regions, which withheld fortunes from Europe, to lavish them on those who dared to brave the dangers of the sea.—The laws of the Indies prohibited all strangers from settling those parts of America, in which they were enforced. The obstacles resulting from those prohibitions, compelled the adventurers to seize on the Antilles, where they hoped to find the same treasures obtained by the Spaniards on the continent. After the first researches, the most restless and courageous of them resolved to punish the Spaniards for thus

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refusing to strangers a participation in their labours and good fortune, by seizing the cargoes destined for Spain. The little island of Tortua, situate on the northern side of St. Domingo, was chosen for the rendezvous, and the residence of these depraved, but wonderful men, who are distinguished in history, by the title of *flibustiers*, or buccaneers. The acts of piracy, or if you please, of heroism, which nourished their ambition and enterprize, during more than fifty years, are foreign to my subject. It is sufficient to say that their number was preserved, and even augmented by other adventurers, similar in courage, hardihood and morals; but at length, fatigue, versatility, or reason, directed their emulation towards territorial productions; and the love of country induced them to demand from the government to which they belonged, chiefs sufficiently intelligent to govern them.

Establishment of the French in America, and their Colonial System.

It was at this time that the French, governed by the last king who knew how to make his country respected, and who was advised by Colbert, the most able and virtuous of ministers, thought seriously of forming solid establishments in America. A friend to the arts, a protector of manufactures, an enthusiast in regard to agriculture, this monarch formed a plan for connecting the mother country with the colonies; and he was careful not to take as a model, the conduct of Spain towards her colonial possessions. Colbert

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conceived that nature had established between France and America, a reciprocity of wants, which should form a reciprocity of exchanges advantageous to the French of both hemispheres: their political and commercial relations were fixed upon this basis, the most solid that imagination can suggest.

In exchange for the protection granted by government, a strict obligation was imposed on the colonies to supply their wants by consuming exclusively the productions of France, and to devote their produce exclusively to their commerce with the mother country. But the absolute exemption from duties of every thing imported from France, and the very trivial duties imposed on colonial produce, rendered these restrictions preferable to a free commerce with all nations: for in that case, the French commerce, less assured of re-imbursement, would not have made those considerable advances, to which the colonies are indebted for their increase. The royal treasury took no part in the regulation of these distant possessions; the French government reserved to itself all the advantages of commerce. The freedom from duties extended not only to the departure from France, and entrance into the colonies, but also to those articles which the commerce of the mother country received from foreign parts into France, for the destination of the colonies. Thus, foreign as well as national merchandize, which formed the cargoes of French vessels, were at the same price in the colonies as in the manufactories, with the sole addition of freight, and of moderate profits to the French merchant who made the shipment.

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By this excellent policy, which no other country has had the courage, the generosity, or the wisdom fully to imitate, the French colonies became general marts for all the other European establishments; in particular for the Spanish settlements, which were in their neighbourhood, and on which they bordered in numerous points.

If the revolution has for an instant suspended this secondary commerce, the return of order, and the same regulations, will naturally re-establish it.

The extreme moderation of duties on produce, as well at their embarkation from the colonies, as at their arrival in France, and extending even to their re-exportation for other countries, places in the hands of French commerce, the exclusive sale of colonial produce in the different markets of Europe.

The English, the only competitors to be apprehended, on receiving their sugar in London, are oppressed with a duty of eighteen per cent. more than is paid in France on colonial produce. They must, therefore, become losers in foreign ports, where the French merchants are contented with moderate profits. To this wise arrangement, also, was the French commerce indebted for the preponderance it had attained. It will obtain it anew, as soon as the abundance of colonial productions shall give to these speculations their ancient range.

Causes which prevent Spain from following the same System.

Spain has long since discerned the excellence of

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such a system, and would have adopted it, if its manufactures could have supplied the wants of America. But, being compelled to obtain all, or nearly all, from abroad, it has perceived with regret, that its commerce must be an agent to that of other nations, among whom must necessarily be diffused all those means of prosperity which confirm their relations with America.

That all may not be lost, it has used its prerogative of sovereignty, to impose considerable duties on merchandize, which multiply with every new destination. The product of these duties diminishes, without doubt, the mass of imposts in the interior and in the metropolis: this is almost the only benefit resulting to the Spanish nation from its immense establishment in the new world.

The fiscal theory introduced local imposts into America, in addition to those duties, of which an account will be found in Chapter IX. Their product serves to furnish salaries to an infinite number of offices which the Spaniards of both worlds solicit with eagerness and occupy with dignity.

Mexico and Peru so completely engrossed the attention of Spain, in the first moments of discovery, that all the residue of America was regarded with indifference; and their mines appeared so precious that the other productions were not taken into calculation. Hence the province of Venezuela and its dependencies were only so far prized as it was imagined some productive mine would give them value. Several were absolutely discovered, which excited hopes; but happily, various considerations occasioned their aban-

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donment. Spanish commerce carefully avoided those shores, since it could neither expect a prompt nor an advantageous sale of its cargoes. If by chance any vessel did appear upon these coasts, it was only to deceive the Spaniards, and to carry off the effects of the Indians, and even the Indians themselves.

First commercial Relations of Venezuela with Spain.

The first legal commercial relations between the province of Venezuela and the mother country appear to have been solicited by the colonists. Nothing arrived from Spain. These countries, abandoned to their poverty, were in want of every thing. Neither the Spaniards, occupied in conquest, nor the inhabitants of Coro, Tocuyo, Borburata, Barquisimeto, Valencia, Truxillo and Collado, the only cities then founded, were supplied, either for combat or for cultivation, with any thing but what nature and the soil furnished them. The former were sustained by their ambition, the latter by their perseverance.

In one of those intervals, wherein the reins of government passed into the hands of the cabildos, a provincial named Sancho Brizeno was sent to Spain, as has been stated in Chapter V. Article Cabildos: he was, among other things, to solicit from the king permission for the annual arrival, at the port of Borburata, of a vessel from Spain, the cargo of which should pay only half of the enormous duties of entry and departure, imposed on the commerce with America. This request was granted, on the 8th December, 1560; a vessel arrived every year at Borburata, and, after

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that port was abandoned, it came to Guayra, until an epoch which history has neglected to record. Probably it continued until the inhabitants had found more convenient methods to procure the same articles.

During the whole of the sixteenth century, the province of Venezuela procured no kind of commercial produce. The daily expectation of discovering mines stifled every idea of agriculture, though it incessantly disappointed the hopes of those infatuated enthusiasts. Cupidity received no other aliment but that derived from the pearls in the environs of Margaretta. Here the pearl fishery was carried on with equal activity and inhumanity; but soon, by sacrificing Spaniards and Indians to this murderous occupation, the bank of oysters which produced them was exhausted.

Contraband Commerce of the Hollanders.

In 1634, the Hollanders seized the island of Curaçao, which they immediately converted into a considerable emporium of merchandize. Then it was, that the inhabitants of Terra-Firma, encouraged by their new and industrious neighbours, thought seriously of drawing from the fertility of their country, those productions, which the Hollanders would receive in exchange for the commodities they had to sell.—They attended particularly to the culture of cacao (cocoa); which, with hides, constituted during a long time, the objects of a commerce, rapidly augmented by their necessities.

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This new state of things was scarcely known in Spain, when permission was solicited and obtained to send two trading vessels to Venezuela. Such was the policy of Spain with regard to its colonies, that no expedition to America could be undertaken without permission from the king: a permission obtained with difficulty and much expence; and with the charge of paying enormous duties, and making the harbour of Seville the place of departure and return.

The merchandize, which, from being the workmanship of Spain, or from the profits of a second hand, if of foreign manufacture, already bore a high price, was still loaded with additional charges. Folly or ignorance alone, could expect advantages from shipments to a country, where the same articles were carried by the commerce of Holland, without duties, without shackles, and directly from the manufactories of Europe. These speculations were of course, ruinous. The two Spanish vessels sold their cargoes at a loss of sixty per cent. and received scarcely any lading in return. This experiment was sufficient to warn Spanish traders against further expeditions to these countries.

From this time, the trade of the Hollanders with Terra-Firma became more open and more extended. The residue of the century elapsed without the arrival of a single vessel from Spain. During the first thirty years of the succeeding century, the concourse of Spanish vessels, though very great in comparison to the arrivals during the preceding forty years, bore

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no proportion to the quantity of cacao produced in the province of Venezuela, and exported by the Spaniards to its legal destinations. The annual produce of the province amounted to sixty-five thousand quintals of cacao, while the legal exports were only twenty-one thousand quintals, to Spain, Vera-Cruz, St. Domingo, the Canaries, and the other Spanish possessions. All the residue went off in contraband.

The Spanish government perceived with pleasure, that a province so long disregarded, gave well founded hopes of ranking among the most interesting possessions of America; yet it saw with pain, that all its useful connections were with foreigners. No expedient suggested itself to the minister, for directing its commerce exclusively to the mother country, but the establishment of a severe inspection, which should prevent all communication with the Hollanders. The contraband trade was persecuted with ardor. Though many confiscations were pronounced, many fines exacted, a degrading punishment inflicted, numerous families ruined, the evil remained the same. It was supported by the nature of things, much more potent than all the coercive expedients of human invention.

Company of Guipuscoa.

In 1728, some Biscayan merchants made a proposition to the king, that they would, at their own expence, destroy the contraband trade of foreigners, with the province of Venezuela; on condition that they should be permitted to supply the country and

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export its produce to the metropolis. Never were circumstances more favourable; never was a proposition more readily adopted. It encountered some local difficulty; for the vessels destined for America ought to have cleared out from and returned to the ports of Biscay, which was reputed foreign to the royal duties, in place of the port of Cadiz, where all expeditions for America must be made. But the manner in which the greater point was regulated, proves that perseverance overcomes all obstacles.

Wise Conditions of the Concession.

The royal grant permitted that the province of Guipuscoa should form a company, and send annually to the province of Venezuela two vessels of forty or fifty guns, laden with the productions of Spain, which should make their discharge at the port of Guayra; that they should cruise from the mouth of the Orenoko to the Rio-de-la-Hache, to seize all vessels engaged in the contraband trade. For these purposes his majesty would give them letters patent.

In 1734, the company obtained permission to send as many vessels as it pleased; and liberty to dispatch cargoes from St. Sebastian and Passage, on paying to the king the same duties which would have been incurred if the vessels had departed from Cadiz: but the returns must be made directly to Cadiz, for the payment of the duties imposed on colonial produce. A third of the captures made from contraband traders, was adjudged to the crew of the captor, and the other two-thirds to the company. The merchandise cap-

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tured was to be sold at Caraccas, subject to the customary duties. Cargoes of cacao seized by the cruisers were to be sent to Spain; and the company might arm such captured vessels, as were suitable for their purpose. The company's factors had the privilege of sending to Vera-Cruz, the cacao which its vessels could not export to Spain. The company was expressly bound to supply not only the province of Venezuela, but also of Cumana, Margaretta, and Trinidad. The governor of Caraccas was invested with the right of deciding on every thing relative to the commerce of the company of which he was nominated judge conservator. An appeal from his decision must be carried to the council of the Indies.—Finally, the king promises his protection to the company, and declares that any person may be concerned in his commerce, either directly or indirectly, *without derogation to his nobility, and without loss of honour, estate, or reputation.*

We observe with surprise, that all the conditions imposed on the company of Guipuscoa were only balanced by the simple permission of trading with certain provinces of Terra-Firma. The king reserved the right of granting similar privileges to others, if the advantages expected from this grant were not obtained; and the company could only depend on the choice of its agents, the economy of its expences, and the wisdom of its administration, to render useless the efforts of competition. It is certain that this measure, where more depended on chance than foresight, produced two wonderful effects. It compelled the company to proceed on principles of moderation

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and justice; and rendered it welcome to the inhabitants of Terra-Firma. The murmurs which were apprehended have never been experienced, and the hopes given to government have been justified; for the cacao has since proceeded directly to the mother country, instead of passing into foreign hands, as formerly, to be again re-sold, even in Spain itself.

From 1730 to 1748, the company sent directly to Spain, eight hundred and fifty-eight thousand, nine hundred and seventy-eight quintals of cacao; amounting to one-third more than had been sent there in the preceding thirty years; and the cacao of its first shipments, in 1732, was sold at 45 dollars, instead of 80, as formerly.

Exclusive Commerce.

The company thus established proved satisfactory to government in all its relations; and had the address to profit by the confidence and consideration it had acquired, as well in Europe as in America, by soliciting and obtaining the useless privilege of an exclusive commerce.

By means of its policy and success it had attained sufficient credit to attempt this proceeding, which perfectly succeeded. The company stated that, in addition to the advantages already procured to the mother country, it might considerably augment its relations, if the re-imbursement of advancements necessary to the cultivators, were guaranteed by the privilege of exclusive commerce. A royal cedule, in 1742, granted this privilege to Caracas; and by

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another cedule, of 1752, it was obtained for Maracaibo. From this period the company appears to have alarmed the interest and excited the suspicion of the inhabitants of Venezuela, under the hideous aspect of monopoly. They could apprehend nothing less, from this measure, than an endeavour to place a yoke upon the province, and to sacrifice it to the cupidity of the company.

History does not, however, shew that the company changed its former system; but reason sufficiently declares that by the mere solicitation of this exclusive privilege, it had opened a door to all these fears, suspicions and calumnies.

Whether well founded or not, it is a fact that great murmuring was excited, and sharp complaints were uttered that the company abused the victory it had obtained in banishing competition. The discontent became so general and so violent, that the internal tranquillity of the province was on the point of being endangered.

The dissatisfaction would certainly have assumed the character of sedition, if a prudent measure had not been adopted to calm the passions thus violently agitated.

Modifications.

It was agreed, in 1750, that an assembly should be formed composed of an equal number of members of the company and cultivators belonging to the country, in which the governor-general of the province of Venezuela should preside. This assembly was to de-

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termine the price to be paid by the company for cacao, nor should any variation of price be permitted, even in time of war, but in virtue of a formal decision of this assembly. Those inhabitants who were not satisfied with the established price, were also allowed to send a sixth part of their cacao to Spain, on their own account, and in the vessels of the company.

Mexico, Santa-Fe, St. Domingo, Porto-Rico, Cuba, and the Canary islands, retained the privilege of receiving from Venezuela the cacao necessary for their consumption. The company was also obliged to submit to the superior government of the province, the prices at which it intended to sell the articles received from Europe, and the approbation of the governor was rendered indispensable.

The annals of commerce furnish, perhaps, no example of a company, the monopoly of which has been so happily modified by law, as that of the Guipuscoa company. Let us cast a glance upon its operations.

Operations of the Company.

All the persons concerned in this company were Biscayans, and they held their general assembly at St. Sebastian: since 1751, they have held it at Madrid, under the presidency of a member of the council of the Indies. The immense expences of this company, its considerable advances, the multitude of persons employed in the management of its affairs, the extensive assortments always found in its magazines, the wars which at intervals have embarrassed its enterprises, and the profits resulting to the stockholders,

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are circumstances which have presented much difficulty. The success that has attended it can only be explained by the wise rules of its administration, the fidelity of its various superintendants, who are always taken from Biscay, and, above all, the scrupulous prudence which ever directs its operations. At all times, both of peace and war, the vessels of the company were insured against the dangers of navigation.

Being obliged to substitute its own commerce for that formerly carried on by strangers, the company established cruisers on the coasts and posts on the land, to destroy the contraband trade. For this service ten armed vessels, containing 86 guns and 518 men were employed, and 102 men on shore: the support and pay of this establishment cost, annually, 200,000 dollars. In the ports granted to the company, superb edifices were constructed to accommodate its factors and deposit its wares. The wharves or coves of Guayra and Porto-Cavello, were constructed by the company: the former, 175 feet long and 23 broad, the latter, 230 long and 30 broad. It has advanced to the inhabitants 640,000 dollars, without interest, and without hope of re-payment, but from the produce which it receives, at a price fixed by the assembly just described. Since the establishment of this company, several villages in the province of Venezuela have sprung into existence: as Panaguira, Goatira, Calabazo, St. Juan-Baptiste-del-Pao, Montalvan, Ospino, La Savanna d'Ocumare, all the establishments from Macarao to the river Tuy, Volcano, San-Pedro, Lagunetas, Mostazas, and le Frayle. The company sends annually to Terra-Firma

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six vessels of at least three hundred tons each.—Before its establishment, cacao was the only commercial produce known in the province of Venezuela; the company has added hides and tobacco, the annual exportation of which amounts to 200,000 dollars.

From 1735 to 1763, the cultivation of cacao made a prodigious increase. At the first period, the whole produce of the province was estimated at sixty-five thousand quintals, while in 1763, there were embarked, directly

	Quintals.
For Spain	50,319
For Vera Cruz	16,864
For the Canaries	11,160
For St. Domingo, Porto-Rico and Havanna	2,316
Local consumption	30,000
Total	110,659

During the same interval, the plains to the south of Caraccas, which nature has rendered suitable for the raising of animals, acquired triple the number they formerly had possessed. The various duties, till then insufficient to defray the expences of government, became adequate to every charge; and the king was exempted from the obligation he had been under, during near two hundred years, of sending money from Mexico to Venezuela and Cumana, for the payment of the tribunals and troops. In short, every thing in the province of Venezuela assumed a cheerful aspect, an air of prosperity, not seen in any other Spanish possession.

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Total Change of System.

This original delicacy of the company experienced a fatal alteration. The moderation of its prices, its scruples on the quality of articles, the mildness and forethought of its agents, all disappeared almost at the same time. A part of its profits were employed in tampering with the assembly destined to curb its cupidity, or rather, in paralysing its action by gaining the chief into its interests. Its disregard of its duties, its abuse of its credit, was carried to such a degree, as to engage with the Dutch of Curaçao, in the contraband trade which it had pledged itself to its sovereign to destroy. By these means the planters were injured and the mother country deprived of the trade, which the company carried on thus shamefully with strangers.

Liberty of Commerce.

It was proper that such disorders should occasion, as in fact they afterwards did, the dissolution of the company. This measure was not, however, executed as promptly as it ought to have been, because the new monopoly, the new exactions, were protected and defended by the partisans which the company had made, and which it preserved by the influence of its gold.

The Spanish minister could not obtain details sufficiently precise and authentic to justify him in striking directly on the company, for it was not less supported in Spain than in America. He acquired, however,

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sufficient information to ascertain the extent of the territory wherein it exercised its privileges, in the vast plan formed for the commerce of America, and put in execution by the regulation called *Free Commerce*, of the 12th October, 1778.

Commercial Revolution which followed

To perceive the happy revolution, produced by this regulation, to the commerce of Spain and her colonies, it is necessary to be acquainted with the commercial history of that country, during the three last centuries. The policy of that period will be found to have been entirely devoted to embarrass speculators, to restrain and destroy expeditions, and to convert every thing to royal revenue. In this new law, on the contrary, will be perceived the developement of a system entirely opposed to the one before pursued. Reason will there be seen, if not entirely destroying, at least attacking the front of prejudice, substituting enlarged for contracted views, and opening to genius, activity, and industry, a field which the policy or the timidity of the ministry had kept hitherto closed.

The commercial laws, issued by the council of the Indies, subsequent to the regulation of 1778, are dictated by the same spirit of wisdom, of calculation, of hardihood, which renders the modern change of the commercial system inexplicable.

Let us review the different grants which, for twenty years past, have concurred to give to the commerce of Spain with America, the encouragements and facili-

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ties which that nation had constantly denied it before 1778.

By the regulation of 1778, it was stipulated that the vessels employed in the American trade, should uniformly belong to Spaniards, and should be of national construction. He who had built one for this trade, of the size of three hundred tons and upwards, obtained as a premium, the reduction of a third of the duties on the Spanish merchandise which was embarked in it.

The captains, commanders, masters, sea-officers, and two-thirds of the crew were to be native or naturalised Spaniards.

The sea-ports of the mother country open to America, which before were restricted to a very small number, are Cadiz, Seville, Malaga, Almira, Carthagena, Alicant, Valencia, (order of the king of the 27th February, 1794) Alfaguez, Detortoza, Barcelona, St. Andero, Gijon and Vigo, (order of the king of the 27th July, 1783); Palma-de-Sainte-Croix de Teneriffe, Majorca, and Canaries, for their respective productions, and not for foreign articles, of which the rent is only permitted from the ports of the mother country; (order of the king of 9th June, 1799.)

Opening of the American Ports to the Spanish Trade, and the wise distinction which has been made thereon.

This salutary operation has likewise been extended to America, where very few ports had the privilege of trading with the mother country. At present,

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almost all those whose roads permit the entrance of vessels from long voyages can not only receive the ships of the mother country, but likewise trade directly to the ports of Spain. The wisdom of the legislature, in opening new ports, has even been carried so far as to declare them *minors*.

To understand the advantage resulting from this regulation, it is proper to observe that Spain divides her American ports into *majors* and *minors;* in the first they pay all the duties specified in the custom book, or tarif; that is to say, all the royal and municipal duties; in the second, they pay none but municipal duties, as well on leaving Spain, as on entering the minor port. The statement of duties which the goods pay, are inserted at the end of this chapter, and will give the reader all the information which he can desire on this rather complicated subject. The object of this division of ports, is to establish a species of balance between the ports most frequented, and those which are least so. In the former the articles of merchandise are soon sold, and the re-loading soon completed; whereas, in the ports less populous, or at least, within reach of great cities, or the fair of cultures, the speculator experiences delays which would make him avoid them, if he did not find a counter consideration in the diminution of duties.—Thus the part not cultivated, could never hope to be so, because industry, the inseparable companion of commerce, would not fix itself in places which commerce avoided.

The major ports of the captaincy-general of Caraccas are Guayra, since its establishment, and Por-

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to-Cavello, by order of the king, of the 25th of July, 1798. Maracaïbo is next; Cumana, Barcelona, Margaretta, and Guiana are the minor ports. The port of Coro is the only one denied a trade with the mother country; it was, however, the first which was opened to that trade, nor has any law expressly deprived it of this privilege; but, surrounded with desert or sterile lands, the want of articles of exchange has naturally effected this deprivation.

The duties which are received on goods going from a major, to a minor port, are restored; but to go from a minor to a major they are obliged to pay the remainder of the duties; in the mean time, by a singular favour, the vessels sailing from Maracaïbo for Spain may stop at Guayra, without prejudicing the immunities of minor ports. (Order of the king, July 13th, 1694.)

Political and fiscal basis of Spanish tarifs.

The import and export duties, imposed for a length of time on all goods, have undergone a reform, in which are combined as much as possible, the need which the revenue has of the proceeds of the custom-house, the protection required by the national industry, the activity of commerce, and the supply of Spanish America.

All the articles composing the cargoes destined for the colonies are divided into three classes: the first comprehends articles of the growth or manufacture of Spain, which are called *free articles*, because they are only subjected to duties which appear trifling

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when compared with those paid by the other species, notwithstanding which, however, they are above nine and a half per cent. both on their leaving Spain, and their entry in America. Those, likewise, are considered as national goods of which the national industry has doubled the value, excepting articles from the cotton manufactories of Catalonia, and other parts of the kingdom, on which the duties should be received, in virtue of the order of the king, of the 28th of February, 1784, unless it be proved that they were made with the cotton of the Spanish possessions.

The second class comprises articles of contribution: these are articles which, though of foreign production, have received a degree of workmanship in Spain, which has either given them a new form, or improved that which they had; in such a degree, however, as not to augment their value more than one half; for in that case they are reputed national.

The duties paid at their shipment for America, and on their arrival there, amount to about twelve and a half per cent.

In the third class is found all that is imported from foreign parts to Spain, and ultimately sent to America. All foreign merchandise pays on its entry into Spain, fifteen per cent.; on its departure for America, seven per cent.; and at its arrival seven per cent. besides the duties of *internation*, *indulto*, and *consulat*, and independent, likewise, of other moderate duties, which raise the price of all foreign merchandise, imported from the mother country, about forty-three per cent.

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Colonial productions, excepting cacao, pay but inconsiderable duties on leaving America, and on their entry into Spain, and are totally exempt from duty on their exportation from Spain for foreign markets.

All unwrought materials which the nation cannot consume, and which go to supply foreign manufactories, pay heavy duties on their exportation, which, by raising the price of the articles in which they are employed, gives the Spanish manufacturer an incalculable advantage over the foreign one.

The wool of the Lama, *vigogne*, and sheep, exempt on their entry in Spain, are subject to duty on exportation, the first to eight per cent. on their value, the second to fifteen per cent, and two dollars besides per quintal, according to the pragmatic sanction of 1800; and the third at thirty three and a third per cent. &c.

Such are the principles followed by the Spanish government, to secure some part of the prodigious market offered by the West-Indies to European manufacturers.

The effect which should naturally be produced by this wise combination of tarifs, would be to excite emulation and industry. But carelessness, or other faults in political economy, has deceived the hopes of government, and converted a measure designed to benefit Spanish manufactures, into an encouragement of illicit traffic.

Several regulations have been adopted to oblige the merchants to compose their cargoes for America, of national commodities. In a little time they exacted but a third, and to those who included more

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than a third in their cargoes, they allowed a premium in the reduction of the duties. Finally, by an order of the 20th November, 1797, the king accorded to shippers the liberty to export as they pleased either in foreign or national commodities.

Conditions to authorise trade with Spanish America.

To carry on trade from Spain to America, it is necessary to be a Spaniard either by birth or naturalization. A stranger cannot engage in it even in the name, or as a representative of his wife, his children, or his father-in-law. The system in regard to this, is so uniform, that the last order of the king, which established this measure, is of the 6th of February, 1803; and according to another order of the 19th of May, 1784, and a cedule of the 19th of July, 1790, the productions and commodities of America cannot be consigned to strangers. But, thanks to the national manners, which indulge a taste for an idle, or as they term it, *noble* mode of life, which the laws endeavour, in vain, to destroy, the Spaniards prefer the practice of lending their names, to the troublesome exercise of commerce. The strangers established at Cadiz, that general mart of American commerce, are enabled, it is said, by means of a trifling consideration, to cover, with great facility, their expeditions to America with a Spanish name: it should be added to the honour of this nation, that there has not been an example where the confidence of the stranger has been deceived. This fraud, if it be one, is far from being prejudicial to the Spanish nation,

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for it gives an activity to the trade of the mother country, which it certainly would not have had, if entirely prosecuted by the citizens.

By the orders of 30 November, 1762, and 7 February, 1792, the commodities which went to America and returned from thence, for want of sale, paid at their return the duties of importation, and repaid those of exportation if they were again sent out: but by order of the 26 September, 1803, commodities not sold, returned from America to Spain, are not only exempt from all duties, but also obtain the restitution of those which they paid on going out.

Subdivision of the Commerce of Terra Firma.

The commerce of the provinces of Caraccas with the mother country, is almost all carried on by the port of Guayra, which, notwithstanding its bad road, disputed for a long time with the other ports, the advantage of being most frequented.

The reason was, that the environs of Caraccas, where the productions are most abundant, have no other vent but the capital, which in its turn, cannot export them but at Guayra; and as the population of this great city consumes the most of articles of necessity, comfort and luxury, the trader is interested in resorting to it. In consequence of these circumstances Porto-Cavello, thirty leagues to leeward, was never used as the port of shipment, excepting of the articles produced in its environs, in part of the valleys of Aragoa, Valencia, San Carlos, Saint Philippe, &c If it happened, too, that the natural produce so

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far increased as to exceed the value of the goods brought by European vessels, the traders repaired to Guayra to discharge their European cargoes, of which they could not otherwise expect a good sale, and afterwards went to Porto-Cavello to load in return.

Maracaïbo, Cumana and La Guiana, received annually each two or three vessels from the mother country; but at Maracaïbo they could only obtain in return cargoes of coffee and deer skins; at Cumana, cotton, and a little coffee; at La Guiana, only the produce brought there from Varinas, Barquisimeto, &c. They sailed there by the river Apure, which discharges itself into the Oronoko.

Profits of the Spanish Merchant.

The trade of Terra-Firma is far from being as advantageous to the Spanish merchants as is generally supposed. The common calculation is that the cargoes delivered in America, acquire, one with another, by the duties, freight, assurances, commissions, and other inferior expences, a value of thirty per cent. above their price in Spain. A merchant thinks himself very fortunate when he sells the whole of his commodities at thirty-three and a third per cent above first cost; so that the neat profit is but three and a third per cent. and it may even be said that this scanty profit is fictitious; for it is doubtful if it cover the losses to which the merchant is exposed by the credit he is obliged to give to obtain the return of which I have just spoken.

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Management of Cargoes.

The merchants of the different Spanish ports, carry on the trade to Terra Firma, and all Spanish America, on their own account. They consign their vessels to factors, who multiply in all the American ports. They have a commission of five per cent. on the sales, and four per cent. on purchases. Sometimes, though rarely, the captain is consignee, and takes a store house, which is called the *registre* of such a vessel, or such a captain. This measure rarely turns out to the advantage of the shipper, because the captain, who can never know the country as well as those who inhabit it, is apt to dispose of his merchandise disadvantageously. If he gives credit freely, the slowness and difficulty of recoveries, prolong the stay of the vessel in the port, and diminishes in proportion the profits of the speculation. If he give no credit, he cannot sell except below the current price, and meets with losses in a sale where a factor would have gained profits.

The merchants of Cadiz, convinced of this truth, always consign their vessels to factors residing in America.

The Catalonians are the only traders who make consignees of their captains; and they do not always find themselves the losers by this plan, because the captains find a great many of their countrymen in America, engaged in mercantile occupations, who unite probity to the love of their country, and who exercise among themselves the duties of the purest friendship, under the most grotesque external. They

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render each other, mutually, all possible services; they are sober, laborious, and upright. Their speculations are almost always in common. A purchase of importance is always made by as many Catalonians as the article purchased can be divided among. It is thus that the greatest part of the cargoes coming from their country are sold. One or two Catalonians make the bargain, all the others remain silent. As soon as it is concluded, the whole swarm appears for the division. The singularity of this fraternity is incontestably owing to the particular idiom which is spoken in Catalonia; it prevails equally among the Biscayans, without producing the same effects on commercial transactions.

The commodities sent from Spain to Terra Firma are deposited in the warehouses of the factors, where the retail merchants go to examine them. I should not omit to notice the singular circumstance that these warehouses have never any door opening on the street. They are always in the interior of the houses, and frequently it is necessary to knock at the door to have it opened. Whatever may be done by the laws, the national opinion still refuses the consideration to commerce which it enjoys every where else. The Creoles are still more averse to it than the Europeans. No situation but such as derives its emolument from the king, is held here in any degree of estimation.

The commodities are sold to retailers at four or six months credit; but the payment although promised to be entire, is generally done in part only, and new terms are often entered into to lengthen the

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credit to years. It is evident that if the vessel were obliged to wait the collecting of the payment for its cargo, in order to re-load its returns, it would consume the proceeds in expences, or would occasion enormous losses to the shipper.

To prosecute this trade with some success, therefore, it is necessary to have funds already provided in America, so as to be able, at the moment of the vessel's arrival, to commence the purchase of produce, which is rarely found collected in sufficient quantities to complete a cargo in a few days. It is with the money arising from previous cargoes, that the factor is enabled to load and expedite the departure of the fresh vessels that arrive.

Importations by the trade of the mother country.

But it is time to inform the reader of the amount of the importations usually made by the trade from the mother country to Terra Firma. Those which were made from 1797 to 1803, cannot serve as a rule, because the commercial relations with the mother country, were almost null until the peace of Amiens; nor have they, even yet, entirely recovered.

I believe I cannot do better than state the importations of the year 1796, which formed a grand part of the interval of neutrality enjoyed by Spain, between its peace with France and war with England.

Porto Cavello, not being at this time open to the trade of the mother country, the port of Guayra was the only one of that province which the vessels of Spain frequented. The port of Barcelona was as yet

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closed, and Cumana and Maracaïbo sent their produce to Guayra, because they had no vessels loading in their ports. La Guiana continued its relations with the neighbouring colonies.

By the registers of 1796, however, it is seen that there arrived at Guayra forty-three vessels, of which fifteen were ships, four polacres, two chebecs, twenty-one brigs, and one schooner, who discharged, according to the estimate of the custom house, as follows.

	Dollars.
In free and national articles,	932,881¾
In articles of contribution,	753,442⅜
In foreign articles,	1,429,487⅜
Total	3,118,811½

Or, 15,579,055 Francs.

These articles pay 281,328 dollars, importation duties.

Exportations.

The declaration of war by Spain against England surprised a great many vessels in the port of Guayra. Many of them, whose sales were not completed, nor their payments made to them, were obliged, in order not to risk the whole, to leave the greater part of their funds in the power of the factor, where almost the whole remained until the peace of Amiens.

During the year of 1796, therefore, there did not sail from Guayra to Spain more than twelve ships, five polacres, three packet boats, six brigs, and a

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chebeck, in all thirty-seven vessels; and their cargoes were composed of produce, of which the value was fixed by the custom house of Guayra at 2,098,316 dollars, on which the duties levied amounted to 138,052 dollars; or 690,260 francs.

Purchase of Produce.

In no town of Terra-Firma, not even at Caracas, have the merchants any place of meeting, like our exchanges, to treat of commercial affairs: every one labours in the silence and solitude of his counting-house. Barter or exchange is entirely unknown among them. No paper is to be seen there in circulation; for they are strangers to the custom of discount. All commercial transactions are conducted directly and privately between the seller and the purchaser: neither have they any price-current. These towns are rather factories than places of trade.

The purchase of produce is not made at Terra-Firma as in the other colonies, in large quantities. The city of Caracas is the grand mart of the province; but its situation, in the midst of mountains, not permitting any other conveyance than on the backs of mules, the productions arrive but in small quantities, which are carried about the city to be sold to the best bidder. The planters have no travelling agents and factors as in the French colonies, to carry out their productions on sale. The planter has no ties of interest, and still less of intimacy, with the merchant. The wants of the cultivator often occasion a momentary intercourse; he offers to deliver the merchant,

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in a stipulated time, a certain quantity of produce at a specific price, which must be paid in advance; good faith sometimes presides at these bargains, and effects a happy conclusion. But often, also, the authority of the tribunal is claimed, to enforce the execution of agreements; and I am inclined to question whether the merchant be not always the demandant. The complaints generally turn on the negligence of the planter, the bad quality of the produce, or its adulteration. It is evident that such transactions tend rather to occasion distrust between the merchant and the planter than harmony, and that this misunderstanding is one of the greatest obstacles which the public prosperity can encounter.

Quality of the productions of Terra-Firma.

The commercial productions of Terra-Firma (as has been observed in the preceding chapter) are of a superior quality to those of the French colonies, excepting the cotton, the inferiority of which ought rather to be attributed to the fault of its preparation, than to that of the soil.

The cacao of Caracas, after that of Soconusco, obtains in trade the preference over that of other parts of America; even over that which is cultivated on the same continent; in the environs of the province of Venezuela. When the cacao of Caraccas is at 50 dollars a quintal at Cadiz, that of La Madeleine is at 44, that of Guayaquil at 32, and that of Maraguon at 25. The cacao sells by the *fanega*, or sack of one

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hundred and ten pounds Spanish weight, which is within a trifle of one hundred pounds French.

The indigo of Caraccas is inferior only to that of Guatimala. No other known species of indigo has, within twenty-five or thirty per cent, the value of the indigo of Caraccas. It is distinguished in trade into *flor*, or first quality, *sabresaliente*, or ordinary, and *corte*, or inferior. When the first is at 12 reals the pound, the second is at 10, and the third at 8.

It is impossible yet to ascertain what rank commerce will assign to the coffee of Terra-Firma, because it has not been exported in sufficient quantities to have obtained a particular place in the prices current. But the form of the grain, and its flavour, which cannot be disputed, announce that one day or other, and that not far distant, the coffee of Terra-Firma will attain to the same consideration which its cacao has for a long time enjoyed. The sugar evinces the unskilfulness and ignorance of its manufacture, but does credit to the soil which produces it.

Their price.

In the month of July, 1804, cacao was at Caraccas, 160 francs the quintal. (Its ordinary price is from 100 to 110 francs.)

Indigo, flor, the pound, - - 68 francs.
The sabrisaliente and corte in proportion.
Coffee, the quintal - - 130
(There was but little in the market.)
Cotton, a quintal, - - - 60 to 80.
To the price of produce purchased at Caraccas

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must always be added the conveyance to Guayra, which is done on mules, and costs 5 francs the load of four arrobas, or two quintals. The comparison of the prices of Caracccas and Cadiz, being an exact measure of the results obtained by the Spanish trade, and its relations with Terra-Firma, it is proper also to make known those of Cadiz.

In the month of August, 1804, the colonial productions yielded there from thirty-five to forty per cent profit.

But we must not forget to deduct from the profits, the duties, the expences, the capitals which languished at Terra-Firma.

Freight of produce for Spain.

Among the multiplied objects which diminish the profits of speculations from Spain to Terra-Firma, freight merits some distinction. It has been carried so high during the last war, as of itself to arrest the trade of the mother country with its colonies. Cacao, the sole production which was sent to Spain, paid 12 dollars per quintal, of which three were paid in advance. All the other articles were in proportion.

In time of peace the freight of cacao is 3 dollars per *fanega* of one hundred pounds Spanish.

The waste which the cacao experiences during the voyage is charged to the account of the captain. To cover this they remit him three per cent. that is to say, of one hundred and ten pounds which he has received, he is only bound to deliver one hundred and seven in Spain. Often, however, the waste exceeds

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the three per cent. allowed, and the captain is obliged to complete the hundred and ten pounds at his own expence. This loss is rated at one and a half per cent. This condition is intended to secure the care and vigilance of the captain.

Insurances.

The custom of insurances, which is equally prevalent in Spain as in other countries, greatly enlivens the trade with America. Without this wise practice, the number of commercial expeditions would be much less than it is at present. Cadiz had a Chamber of Insurance subject to regulations approved by the king; it was dissolved by the enormous losses which it sustained at the commencement of the war with England in 1796. At present the insurances are made in partial policies of sums more or less important, which particular capitalists insure on particular vessels; the shipper thus chooses his insurers, and prosecutes them separately in case of dispute. This mode is, on the whole, more advantageous than the establishment of chambers of insurance. The ordinary premium of Cadiz for the gulph of Mexico is from two and a half to three per cent. in times of peace, and according to the season.

Reciprocal Trade of the Spanish Provinces.

The commerce which the provinces of Caracas carry on with the other Spanish possessions is of very little importance. From Barcelona to Havanna, on

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the island of Cuba, they carry meat salt and dried, which they call *tosino;* it is prepared at Barcelona, where it costs a little more than 25 francs the quintal, and sells at Havanna at 60 and 70 francs. Returns are made in sugar, wax and silver; from Maracaïbo they send cacao, &c.; from Coro, tanned sheep-skins and cheese of the country; from Porto-Cavello, mules, when they do not expect to make more of them at Jamaica; from Guayra, cacao and sarsaparilla, &c. Neither Cumana, Margaretta nor Guiana have any commercial relations with the island of Cuba. All that these provinces send to Porto-Rico, or receive thence, is transported by a small schooner, which passes each month from Porto-Rico to Guayra, to convey the letters which the Spanish packet leaves at Porto-Rico, in passing to Havanna. All this trade, together with that carried on with Cuba, amounts annually to a hundred thousand dollars.

Some time since Guayra had commercial intercourse with Vera Cruz, which was highly advantageous to Terra-Firma. It had formed there a new market for its cacao, which contributed not a little to sustain the price of this produce. In 1763, it exported to Vera Cruz sixteen thousand eight hundred and four quintals. This exportation has continued during several years; but at present is almost extinct.

Maracaïbo carried on a greater trade there than all the rest of Terra-Firma: the cargoes were composed of cacao, balsam of Copahu, &c. and brought back in return glass-ware made at Mexico, beads for rosaries, sacks for baling, India stuffs, which arrive there by Acapulco, and a payment in gold or silver. This

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branch of commerce, however, was so much the more important for Venezuela, inasmuch as it alone furnished all the silver in circulation there; and if a happy event had not replaced it, the provinces of Caraccas would have been condemned to a scarcity of money, which would have subjected them to all the disastrous effects of poverty. At the epoch when the navigation from Terra-Firma to Vera Cruz relaxed to such a degree as to create apprehensions that it would absolutely cease, the king by his order of the 1st of September, 1792, permitted that the national vessels which went from Spain to Vera Cruz, might touch, on their return, at Caraccas; that is to say, in the ports dependent thereon; with the privilege of carrying thither from Vera Cruz, flour and other articles, and employing their proceeds in cacao, indigo, &c. without being subjected to other duties than those paid in the coasting trade. The silver carried to Vera Cruz for the purchase of its produce was declared, by the same order, exempt from duties. Simple as this measure may seem, it does not fail to favour the national commerce, and to enliven Terra-Firma—the national commerce, because the vessels which go from Spain to Vera Cruz find a ready market there for their cargoes, and at higher prices than can be procured at other Spanish ports in the neighbourhood of strange possessions; but the direction which local industry has taken there, not permitting payment to be made for the greater part of articles of importation, except in *money*, they would have been obliged to carry off the produce of their cargoes in specie, and to forego the profits of a return,

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had the ports of Venezuela not been opened to them—Terra-Firma, because Vera Cruz not having any thing to offer it but flours, on which there are oftener losses than profits, the vessels from Europe which leave Vera Cruz, can only carry dollars to Terra-Firma for the produce which they go to purchase. By this means the provinces receive sums which would render its specie very abundant, if the contraband trade, of which we shall speak as soon as possible, did not cause it to disappear at the same time that it entered. It may be said with certainty, that there arrive each year in the ports of Venezuela by this way, at least two hundred thousand dollars, without the circulation being rendered more active thereby.

Money in Circulation.

It is estimated that the mass of the current money in the province of Caraccas is not more than three millions of dollars, of which the fourth is in small clipped coin, which they call *macouquina*. Its form, which would debar it the honour of a coin, and also its weight retains it in the country, because it cannot be taken away without sinking a third of its value. A bag of this money, which represents the value of one thousand dollars, does not actually weigh more than seven hundred; but as it has a currency which nobody disputes, the exchange for dollars is made with great facility, and without premium.

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Considering the system generally adopted by mother countries, and particularly that which has been pursued by Spain, which passes for the most rigourous, we can no less than admire the condescension of this government, which permits the inhabitants of its American possessions to trade directly with foreign colonies. It is inexorable against the admission of any strange flag into its ports; but it allows its own to extend its relations more extensively than any other country has ever permitted to its colonies.

It has been a general rule among them to forbid their foreign possessions to import any articles of consumption, except from themselves, and to dispose their produce in any other channel than that of the national trade. If any one of them has at all modified this law and permitted its colonies, as France has done hers, to import in exchange any articles which could not be furnished directly from the mother country, for wood, salt provisions, or cattle, &c. it has not allowed them to send their produce to any other destination than its own.

The decree of the 30th of August, 1784, expressly forbid any payment to be made for such things as are permitted to be imported from foreign markets, except in syrups, taffia, and commodities brought from France. Spain alone grants to its colonies the power of carrying all their productions, excepting cacao, to foreign markets. All that it has done to favour the national trade has been to restrain the importation of plantation utensils, of new negroes, or of gold and silver, in

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payment or exchange. No vessel can carry any other articles than these to foreign colonies, unless it have obtained express permission from the intendant before its departure, which is accorded with difficulty. In case of the slightest violation, the vessel, cargo, and all, are confiscated, and the penalty of the laws enforced.

It is manifest at first sight, that the great freedom of exportation ought to have in view the advancement of cultivation, and this was without doubt the end originally proposed by the legislator: but the event has not realised his expectations: for it appears that during the last year, (1796) when trade preserved the equilibrium which it should maintain in time of peace, that all the produce which went to foreign colonies did not amount to 150,000 dollars.

But the mules, oxen, and hides, threw considerable sums into the mass of exportations, because these are the articles of which the foreign colonies are in want, and in which Terra Firma abounds.

Trade in Animals.

The native temper of the Spaniard is more inclined to the pastoral life, which leaves great intervals of repose, than to the agricultural, which demands continual activity, induces him to prefer the arid plains of the Oronoko, which he covers with his herds, to the fertile valleys of Venezuela, which he might enrich with the most valuable productions. From the village of Pao, in the province of Cumana, to Merida, that is to say, for an extent of more than one hundred and fifty leagues east and west, and a breadth of forty

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leagues, are every where found *hates* (rude inclosures of pasture lands) of greater or less dimensions, which are filled with mules, oxen, and horses. Many planters of Caraccas have these kinds of possessions at a distance of eight, ten, and twelve days' journey from the town where they reside; and the planters of Calaboso, St. Sebastien de los Reyes, Goanara, Truxillo, Varinas, San Carlos, St. Philippe, Barquisimeto, Carora, &c. have scarcely any others. The revenues produced by these inclosures are slow and precarious. The inundations and droughts occasion losses which often destroy the fairest hopes of the owners. The mules are not proper for work until five years of age. The females are preferable to the males. It is known that they sustain fatigue better, and that they sooner accustom themselves to new pasturage. There is a greater demand for them in the provinces of Caraccas, because every thing is there transported on the backs of mules. No river, excepting the Oronoko for Guiana, carries the produce to the ports of embarkation. The mules are also the only saddle animals used by the Spaniards of Terra Firma who inhabit the mountains, or who are obliged to traverse them. They find them more steady than horses, at the same time that they are easier to maintain, and much more patient of hunger and thirst.

In all the islands, both windward and leeward, mules are indispensable, as well for carriages, as for sugar mills, and can only be supplied from Terra Firma.—Trinidad receives them by way of Guarapiche; Tobago, by Grenada, Barbadoes, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Martinique; Guadaloupe, by Guiana, Cumana, and

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Barcelona; Porto-Rico, by St. Domingo, and Cuba; and Jamaica, by Porto-Cavello. Some are also embarked at Coro for the two last islands.

The port of Guayra is in a manner shut to this commerce by the difficulty which the roughness of its coast opposes to the embarkation of animals.

By the immense consumption of mules, we may judge how much they must abound at Terra-Firma. It is estimated, that the annual produce is sixteen thousand, of which six thousand are employed in the country, and the residue go to foreign colonies. The working mule, called *saca*, cost during the last war twenty-five dollars at the port. They were obtained for fourteen or fifteen dollars on the spots where they were raised, but no prudent speculator receives them at his own risk till the moment of embarkation.

If the late war, from 1793 to 1801, had been a proper war for Terra-Firma, the price of mules would have risen on the return of peace; but, by a singularity which I must be excused from explaining, the commerce of Terra-Firma has slackened since that period, when, in the ordinary course of things, it should have become more active. Thus the price of mules diminished instead of increasing.

On the supposition that the price of mules had been kept up at twenty-five dollars, the ten thousand annually exported would amount to 250,000 dollars. The freight received by the Spanish vessels, estimated at the lowest rate, and with a deduction of the mules which perished at sea, amounts to 150,000, making in the whole 400,000 dollars, or 2,000,000 francs.

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But as, instead of selling them on the spot, the Spaniards ship the mules on their own account, which sell in the colonies for 250 or 300 francs, (50 or 60 dollars) it follows, admitting a loss of one tenth in transportation, and putting them at the lowest price of 250 francs, that they produce the sum of 2,500,000 francs, or 500,000 dollars, which Terra-Firma ought annually to receive in plantation utensils, new negroes, or money.

The precautions adopted by the customs, to obtain accurate returns of the produce of the mules sold in the colonies, subject the speculators to some troublesome formalities; but craft enables them to elude a great part of them, while favouritism and corruption enable them to evade the rest. It appears from the last estimate, that two thirds of the value of the mules are laid out in dry goods, which are smuggled to the continent.

The number of cattle, which was formerly so considerable as to be sufficient for local consumption, and for that of all the Antilles, is at present so much reduced that it scarcely supplies the country. The want of exportation, and the defective regulation of the buteheries, occasioned horned cattle to sink in price by insensible degrees after 1799; and the hides acquiring an increase from the same period, the animals became only valuable for their skins and tallow. Horned cattle were estimated at ten francs upon the spot, and it was often necessary to take them to the city, where fifteen francs were obtained; but the expense and other incidents of conducting them, re-

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duced the price to five. The hides were valued on the spot at five or six francs, and were sold as soon as collected. The proprietor, thus assailed by want in the midst of his numerous herds, resorted to the only expedient left him. Since the hides alone had value, which was moderate indeed, but certain, he was compelled to kill and skin the cattle to sell the hides and tallow. This office of destroying was entrusted to men mounted on horses, and armed with spears. Bulls, oxen, cows, heifers, all they could reach, fell beneath the murderous steel. The rest were put to flight and plunged into the impenetrable forests, where terror retained great numbers of them. This procedure ceased with the necessity that occasioned it. The proprietors endeavoured to repair the ravages produced by despair; but the injurious example furnished numerous brigands with the idea of making a trade of destroying cattle, for the sake of their hides. The plains were presently infested by these men who live only on the misfortunes of society. Cattle were found on all sides, stripped of their hides, and abandoned to the voracity of birds of prey. The proprietors invoked the authority of the laws, the protection of government, and the assistance of the public force. Their complaints were heard, decrees were issued, and orders given; but the failure of execution assured impunity to the offenders and increased their number.

Prohibition to export produce to foreign colonies.

I was about to pass to another article, when I learnt that by a decree of the intendant, D. Juan Vicente de

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Arce, dated May 12th, 1803, the exportation from Terra-Firma to foreign colonies was restricted to mules alone. As I saw nothing in this measure but a homage rendered to the principles of every mother country, and only a trifling injury to the commercial transactions of Terra-Firma, it at first appeared to me that no injury would result: public clamour has convinced me of the contrary. The duties, expences of transportation, &c. being the same for good as for bad coffee, the commerce with Spain consumed the first quality only. Those of inferior qualities found a sale in the foreign colonies. This prohibition prevented the sale of the greater part of the coffee cultivated in Terra-Firma; because most of the inhabitants, not having the requisite utensils and conveniences for perfecting the preparation of the article, confined their attention to the inferior quality, being certain of obtaining a price proportioned to the care bestowed on it. Spain did not consume a sixth of the coffee produced by the colonies. It became necessary that the other five-sixths should be exported to other markets, where it is impossible that coffee purchased at the price of Terra-Firma, charged with duties, freight, and commissions, could sustain a competition with that of other colonial powers, brought directly to the markets of Europe. It must happen, therefore, either that the commerce of the Spanish speculator should be ruined, or that he should obtain coffee at Terra-Firma thirty or forty per cent under the price for which it was sold in foreign colonies. This abatement of value produced also the ruin of the planter, to whom no other resource remained but that

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of renouncing this species of culture. This result was probably desired by the government, particularly, if the preference should in consequence be given to cacao. But for a change of this nature, always troublesome and expensive, resolution and expedients are requisite, which few Spaniards possess. It is greatly to be apprehended that these discouragements may destroy the slight attachment of the planter to agriculture, and induce him to prefer repose to new enterprises, and to labours of a novel kind, the success of which is always slow and uncertain.

The produce of hides must suffer still more from the restriction of commerce with foreign colonies. Spain receives more than it can consume from Monte-Video and Buenos-Ayres, which furnish much handsomer and cheaper hides. Spain has never had recourse to Terra-Firma for hides, except in those short and rare intervals when the navigation to Buenos-Ayres experienced extraordinary delays, or when war rendered it impossible. In 1796, forty-seven vessels dispatched to Spain, contained only fifteen hundred and thirty-one hides—the surplus of forty thousand furnished by the provinces. If, therefore, the prohibition continues, this branch of revenue will be lost to the country, without the commerce of the mother country deriving the smallest advantage. The king loses the amount of duties, and there is less money in circulation by more than 60,000 dollars per annum. But a remedy is already provided for the evil, by substituting particular permissions to export produce, in lieu of the general privilege which has been abolished.

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Temporary opening of the Ports to Foreigners

The extreme rigour of the prohibitory laws, subject, like all the other measures of man, to the controuling influence of circumstances, was compelled to yield to the urgent necessities which the absence of national commerce had brought upon the provinces of Caraccas, during the last war of the eighteenth century.—The seas were so covered with English cruizers, that no Spanish vessels could depart from their ports without the certainty of being taken: all trade with America ceased in consequence. The provinces of Caraccas were absolutely deprived of every channel for the exportation of their produce, since the same cause which cut off all communication with Spain, rendered it also dangerous for those few of the neighbouring colonies which continued friendly or neutral to resort to their market. If it escaped entire destruction, it was only to support a state of languor nearly equivalent.

At another time these considerations would not have sufficed to awaken the solicitude of the Spanish government; but by the happy reform which I have already announced, reason replaced prejudice, and the boldness of reform was proportioned to the weight of the evil. Instead of losing time in useless deliberations, and of waiting till the injurious state of affairs should grow still worse, the king yielded to the first representations. On the 18th of November, 1797, permission, for the first time, was given to neutral vessels, whether sent from Spanish or foreign ports, to trade with Spanish America. It was provided that

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the articles introduced should not be of the class prohibited; and they were to be subject to the duties prescribed in the regulation of 1778, in the same manner as if the adventures sailed from the mother country, and returned to some port of Spain.

By this measure, the Spanish nation, it is true, lost the advantages of navigation, and became tributary to foreigners for the amount of freight and profits; but the treasury saved its duties, and the colonist his produce.

Revocation of this Measure.

In the mean time, the merchants of Spain, more attached to their own interests than to those of the nation, presented remonstrances to the king, equally earnest and bitter with those made by the French merchants against the decree of August 30th, 1804. Their complaints were not disregarded, for on the 13th of February, 1800, the king revoked in all its parts, not only the order of November 18th, 1797, but also every other permission, general or particular, granted by his own order, or by the governors, viceroys, and intendants of America.

The packet which carried out this fatal order, arrived at Guayra, and it was published in the month of April following; but fortunately for Havanna, the same vessel was captured by the English, in its passage from the coast of Terra-Firma to the island of Cuba; and in consequence of this lucky accident, foreign commerce was not there interrupted.

The prosperity which resulted has frequently ex-

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cited a regret at Terra-Firma, that the vessel had not been captured immediately on her departure from Spain.

The numerous promises which the Spanish merchants made to government, in order to regain the exclusive commerce with America, produced no other effect than adventures which increased the wealth of the enemy, and occasioned bankruptcies, which suspended all commercial relations with the colonies. Scarcely one vessel in six sent from Spain to the West-Indies, ever returned.

Even the dispatches of government were unable to penetrate through the English cruizers, which were every where to be encountered. During the whole of 1801, only a single packet from Europe reached the Havanna; where they used regularly to arrive once a month.

Inactivity of the Spanish Navy in the Antilles.

This misfortune must be ascribed to the inaction of the Spanish marine.

Upon the declaration of war by France against Spain, naval forces were dispatched to the gulf of Mexico. A squadron was sent in 1793. It proceeded directly to Porto-Cavello, where it continued a sufficient time to lose a considerable number of men, by the pestilential miasmas. After a stay of six months, it crossed as rapidly as possible from Porto-Cavello to Fort Dauphin, where a part remained; the rest went to Havanna. In the commencement of 1796, the whole squadron, composed of seven ships of the line

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and ten frigates, collected at Havanna, where, notwithstanding the rupture with England, it waited as patiently for peace as if it had been a stranger to the war. During this time, it was very possible for this force to have disputed the dominion of the sea, since there had not been, during the war, more than six English vessels in the gulf of Mexico, as well for the defence of Jamaica, as to protect the commerce at sea.

Three or four times a year, convoys, composed of all the commercial vessels of the English islands, taking Jamaica for a rendezvous, departed at stated periods for Europe, escorted by a single ship of war and one frigate. They coasted the island of Cuba, and sailed through the strait, without meeting any more obstruction from the Spanish squadron, sleeping at Havanna, than if it had been a picture. This squadron, which could have made a diversion in the West-Indies so advantageous to the common cause of France and Spain, not only left the commerce of the English free, but even abandoned by its supineness that of the allies. All the French and Spanish ports were successively blockaded, each by a single English frigate, while brigs and schooners cruized singly and captured all the vessels sent from France and Spain to their possessions.

A justification may be attempted for this inactivity of the squadron, from damages sustained in the hurried passages from Spain to Porto-Cavello, from Porto-Cavello to fort Dauphin, and from fort Dauphin to Havanna; and also from the diminution of the crews. Was then the boasted arsenal of Havanna emptied by

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enchantment? Was it also impossible to obtain from seven ships of the line and seventeen frigates, a sufficient supply of rigging and sailors to equip seven or eight square vessels?—a number which would have been more than sufficient to sweep the seas, and preserve their dominion!

I wave all reflections on this point. Criticism is not my province. I have promised facts; and I state them as they appeared to me upon the spot. It appertains, however, to my narrative, to add, that the vessels of this squadron were found decayed and not in a state to keep the sea, when at the peace of 1801, an order was sent to the Havanna for their return to Spain.

The Ports again opened to Foreigners.

On turning our attention to the provinces of Caraccas, we find that the cessation of neutral, and the absence of Spanish commerce, presented a desponding perspective, which no expedient sanctioned by law could alter. No resource remained but in smuggling; and this abuse was carried to a great extreme.

Before the particulars are noticed, it is proper to state, that the government of Caraccas, with a view to diminish the relations established with the enemy, opened again the ports of Venezuela to neutral nations, without even imposing on them the obligation of making returns to some port of the mother country, as directed by the royal order of the 18th of November, 1737. The decree, dated the 20th of May, 1801, and signed by the captain-general of Caraccas, limited this permission to the remainder of that year, or to

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the return of peace, if that event should sooner take place. In fact, the news of preliminaries of peace having been signed arriving at Caraccas on the 7th of December, in the same year, all neutral vessels in the port of Guayra, were immediately ordered to depart within a month, and the port was shut against those which came after that period.

In the short space of six months, during which this permission continued, the Americans from the United States proceeded in crowds to Guayra, deceived by a false idea, generally entertained with respect to the Spanish possessions. They believed that money abounded in these provinces, that merchandise was estimated at an exorbitant price, and that the warehouses were crowded with produce without purchasers. They found every thing the reverse of their expectations. Their cargoes were slowly sold and at a loss. Their export freights were incomplete, and purchased at prices which allowed such moderate profits, as were incompetent to cover the expences of the voyage. Part of these disappointments were occasioned, it is true, by the commerce between the Spaniards and English, which still continued, and of which I am now to speak.

Commerce with Enemies.

Were the English so ridiculous as to ascribe the treaty of Basle to the misfortunes of Spain, and not to its good faith, no longer deceived? Have they believed the alliance with France to result from topographical affinity, and not from inclination? Or, while sustaining a war which considerably increased

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the activity of their manufactures and proportionally extended their commerce, did the English imagine that they could make war on the government of Spain, and at the same time form with individuals connections of friendship and interest, which are without example? Were they encouraged by the hope of experiencing no obstacles on the part of the dependant governments? These considerations, true or false, possible or not, must remain unascertained till English policy shall find an interest in their publication. Some facts have defied concealment. During the war which terminated in the year 10, (1802) of the French republic, the Spaniards of America had not only the privilege of frequenting English ports, but each vessel had also a safe-conduct or passport from the English admirals, by means of which they were respected, protected, and even escorted by English cruisers. The safe-conduct answered only for one voyage; but was renewed without difficulty: at first it was obtained for the sum of eighteen dollars, but the price augmented in proportion to the demand. No other formality was required than the exhibition of this passport on entering an English harbour, and to all armed vessels of that nation met at sea. The Spanish flag alone received this protection. No such secret understandings were attached to the tri-coloured flag. Every French vessel was a good prize for the English; but every Spanish vessel was not.

Whatever may have occasioned this singular conduct on the part of the English, it is certain that they acquired by it the exclusive commerce of Spanish

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America, which they enjoy with so much the greater security, as the Spaniards themselves carried their cash and their produce to the English ports, and purchased there the merchandise of Europe. Jamaica was the emporium of Cuba, Guatimala, and, of course, Mexico; of Carthagena, Santa Martha, and Rio-de-la-Hache, for the kingdom of Santa Fe and the possessions of the South Sea; of Maracaïbo and Porto-Cavello, for the province of Venezuela. Curaçao was also the market of the two latter ports.—Trinidad had commercial intercourse with Margaretta, Cumana, and Guiana. There have been counted in the road of Kingston, eighty Spanish vessels, all under their proper flag; in that of Curaçao sixty, and at Trinidad more than forty. This commerce employed above four hundred vessels, which cleared out in Spanish ports for some French or neutral colony, whither they never went. On their return they presented French papers, the falsehood of which, though evident, was never either punished or investigated.

Porto-Cavello alone employed in this commerce one hundred vessels, which exported in 1801, as appears by the register of the customs:

Indigo,	51104 *lb.* at	9 *r.*	57492
Cotton,	18099 *q.*	18	325782
Cacao,	27700	12	332400
Hides,	59247	1	59247
Coffee,	3069	10	30690
Copper,	170	15	2550
Horses,	435	20	8700
Mules,	4311	25	107775
In other articles,			80000
		Dollars	1004636

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The indulgence of the custom-house officers to the pretended destination of vessels, was extended also to the cargoes, a considerable portion of which they allowed to pass without distinction and without duties. From my own observation, and the testimony of persons, whom I have no reason to suspect of exaggeration, I estimate the value of this favouritism at a third of each cargo. This sum being added to the above enumeration, enhances the amount to about 1,300,000 dollars.

These exports are still far from exhibiting the extent of this clandestine commerce: the cash that accompanied these cargoes, and the credits obtained by the Spanish merchants being included, the importation of dry goods exceeded by more than one half the value of exported produce.

During this same year of 1801, the Spaniards had no neutral or friendly colony, to which they could legally resort, except Guadaloupe. The Dutch, Danish, and Swedish possessions, were occupied by the English, St. Domingo had been declared in a state of revolt by the government of Caraccas, and all intercourse prohibited. It became therefore necessary that all vessels going to Jamaica, Curaçao, or Trinidad should clear out for Guadaloupe. Hence the custom-house registers at Porto-Cavello, exhibited the marks of an active and important commerce between that colony and Terra-Firma; while the customs of Guadaloupe made no mention of any arrival from Porto-Cavello.

Habit had rendered this commerce so natural, that the destination of vessels for Jamaica and Curaçao,

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or their arrival from those places, was openly mentioned. The books of the customs alone declared that all this intercourse subsisted with Guadaloupe.—The merchant and the planter, the public officer and the plebeian, were indiscriminately engaged on these expeditions, with the same security as if in full peace with England.

The English merchants, confiding in the punctuality of the Spaniards with regard to these engagements, formed immense credits, so that the produce and cash which came from Terra-Firma, were not sufficient to purchase the merchandise accumulated in the English stores. This commerce acquired from these facilities an astonishing extent and activity.

Did the Spanish government believe itself incompetent to destroy and punish this criminal abuse; or did it tolerate these to avoid greater evils? The question remains undecided. The fact is, that these connections of the Spanish Americans with the enemy ceased only with the war. It was not until after the return of peace, and by virtue of an order from the king, that a judicial inquiry was instituted concerning those who had taken part in that commerce.

Contraband Trade.

There was not a Spanish possession in America where smuggling was not practised. The merchandise from the mother country arrived so overcharged with duties and expences, and the colonies of other nations could furnish the same articles at such inferior prices, that a profit remained to the

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contraband trader which induced him to defy the fiscal laws and all their agents. In no part of America was the contraband traffic more actively carried on than in Terra-Firma.

Contraband Trade with Jamaica.

St. Domingo, in the time of its prosperity, was the emporium of Havanna, Vera-Cruz, Guatimala, Carthagena, and Venezuela. Not a week passed without the arrival of four or five small vessels at Cape Town or Port-au-Prince, each with 20 or 25,000 dollars, in cash, to purchase European merchandise. Articles from France were bought by the Spaniards in preference to those of other nations. Their quality and price obtained a preference which banished every idea of resorting to Jamaica for supplies; notwithstanding the greater proximity of some places which I shall notice. It was after the disastrous events of St. Domingo, that Jamaica became the general magazine of the Spaniards from the gulph of Mexico.—It must be asserted to the credit of the English merchants and the British government, that they employed means to support this lucrative branch of commerce, which have never occurred to the French merchants. The latter relied on the goodness and cheapness of their merchandise; waited patiently for the Spaniard, sold to him for cash, and left to him all the risk of introducing the articles into his own country. The English, on the contrary, allow the Spaniards a credit, and often carry the merchandise to them, or escort their vessels. This last manœuvre

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has been observed since the peace of 1801. Spanish cruisers have, since the conclusion of the war, resumed their functions as *guarda-costas;* the English, on the other hand, established armed vessels on the same coasts to drive away the Spanish cruisers, and protect the contraband traders. This protection was so active, that about the middle of 1803, the Spanish vessels employed to watch the smugglers did not dare to leave the harbours, or, when they left them, took particular care not to keep too near shore.

Contraband Trade with Curaçao.

The island of Curaçao, situate about 12 degrees north latitude, and 72 west longitude from the meridian of Paris, owes its importance and its commerce to its vicinity to Terra-Firma, and, as has been observed in the beginning of this chapter, Terra-Firma is in return indebted to Curaçao for its first attentions to agriculture.

The Dutch are careful to keep this market always well supplied with merchandise suited to the wants of the Spaniards, and the sale is very considerable. The ports from which vessels leave Terra-Firma for Curaçao, are Coro, Porto-Cavello, and Guayra: the cargoes consist of hides, indigo, coffee and sugar, but are rarely equal to the amount of the purchases which they make at the island in return: the deficiency is made up in money, which they lay out in contraband goods. It seldom happens that the cargoes produce at Curaçao more than five or six thousand dollars each, while the cargo purchased in return generally

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exceeds ten thousand. If the exportation of produce should continue prohibited, and that of animals only be permitted, cattle alone must furnish to the contraband trader a pretext for going to Curaçao; for this island, having no agriculture, has occasion neither for mules nor horses. But the number of cattle required being limited to the consumption of fifteen thousand persons, it will be necessary to export cash for nearly the whole of the purchases: the departures from Terra-Firma, and the arrivals must therefore be clandestine, or it must appear that the touching at Curaçao was occasioned by accident.

With Trinidad.

Trinidad, by the peace of Amiens, passed into the hands of the English. It is situated at the eastern extremity of Terra-Firma, from which it is only four leagues distant, and is the natural magazine and resort where the contraband traders of Cumana, Barcelona, Margaretta and Guiana make their purchases.

The position of this island is singularly favourable to this commerce. The Spanish coasts, extensive, solitary, defenceless, and to leeward, offer both to the Englishman and the Spaniard the greatest facility for prosecuting it.

The gulph of Paria, which washes the western part of Trinidad, receives the waters of the river Guarapiche, which penetrates the province of Cumana. By this river animals for labour and for the shambles are brought from Terra-Firma to Trinidad; and through the same channel all the contraband ar-

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ticles consumed in this province can ascend with perfect convenience, or may be landed at several points without the least danger. In general, the cargoes which are destined for Barcelona proceed up this river: they are thence distributed to Caraccas and other cities. The mouths of the Oronoko, which cross the gulph of Paria from south and north, and which are compelled by Trinidad to discharge into the sea by the dragon mouths, open to this island the commerce of Guiana, whither the surplus goes by the river Apure to Barquisimeto, Truxillo, Varinas, Merida, &c.

With Surinam.

The Dutch of Surinam, carried on, during a long time, a contraband trade with Spanish Guiana, but they have been supplanted by the English of Trinidad.

Amount employed in the Contraband Trade.

To judge of the enormous sums annually carried away from the provinces of Caraccas by the contraband trade, it is sufficient to know that the cash in circulation is not augmented by the great accessions it continually receives. We have already estimated that which comes from Vera-Cruz for the purchase of produce, at . . Dollars 400,000

Commerce with foreign colonies . . .		250,000
Hides	50,000	200,000
Produce	150,000	
Carried forward .		850,000

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Brought forward .	850,000

Although the two last articles are prohibited exportation by decree of the intendant, of the 12th of May, 1803, I have seen partial permissions subsequently granted, which render the prohibition a nullity.

It is necessary to deduct from this sum for negroes and utensils of plantation, the only articles permitted to enter, the sum of 100,000

Residue,	Dollars	750,000
Or,	francs,	3,750,000

This balance ought to form the amount of annual increase to the cash in circulation. It is, on the contrary, the amount employed in contraband trade for purchases made in the colonies. To this we may without exaggeration add twenty-five per cent. for the profits of the contraband trade, and we can thus ascertain how much contraband merchandise is annually consumed by these provinces. This addition augments the sum total to 937,500 dollars or, 4,687,500 francs.

Measures to prevent the Contraband Trade.

A great number of persons are employed, both at sea and on shore, to prevent this illicit trade. The orders of the king direct that one brig, six schooners, and six sloops, all armed, shall continually coast from the mouths of the Oronoko to cape De la Vela. At the time of my writing there are only four schooners, distributed between Porto-Cavello, Cumana and Guiana; and six sloops which do not go out of the

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road of Porto-Cavello, but cost as much for the support of their crews as if they were in full activity.*

In the actual state of things, a contraband trader must be very unfortunate to meet one of these schooners. They only keep the sea at intervals sufficiently short and rare, and they must guard an extent of three hundred leagues of coast, which every where furnish suitable points for debarkation. Nor would his misfortune be without remedy, since by sacrificing one part of the cargo, it is not difficult for a Spaniard to save the other. A stranger would not be permitted to compound, or, if he should, the transaction would cost much more.

The dangers on shore would be infinitely greater than those at sea if wretchedness and vice had not rendered the vigilance and severity of the guards a commodity that only requires purchasers. The conditions of the bargain are neither so easy nor so moderate in the harbours as in the country. Restrained by the presence and watchfulness of custom-house officers, the fear of being discharged renders the deputies more circumspect, without rendering them more honest.

The guards are formed into detachments, from which men are taken for established posts on the coast and in the country, and also for patrols. At Coro there is a detachment of thirty-eight men, one commandant and one lieutenant. The fixed posts

* By virtue of new orders from the king, the vessels employed to protect the national commerce by destroying the contraband, are to receive a new organization, and an increase of number.

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assigned to them are Sabanas, Altas, Cumaredo, Arocuta, and Teques. There remains a detachment employed to patrol.

At Guayra there are only eight men and one corporal, whose services are employed in the same harbour: they make also a circuit between Margaretta and Guayra.

The detachment of Caraccas consists of forty-eight men, a commandant and one lieutenant. They are used as patroling guards, except four men, who are stationed in two posts on the mountain which separates Guayra from Caraccas.

Porto-Cavello being nearer to Caraccas, has appeared to require more guards than any other place. It has a detachment of twenty-four men, three corporals and one captain, for its different posts. They are distributed, four at Palito, and six at Cambura, on the road from Porto-Cavello to Valencia; four at Patanemo, six at Yaracui, and four at the river Tocuyo. Another detachment, also, of twenty-four men, attends the harbour under the immediate orders of the guard-major of Porto-Cavello.

In the harbour of Ocumara, at the east of Porto-Cavello, there is a post of eight men and one commandant.

Guiana has only a light squadron, which never departs from San-Tomaso the capital, except in extraordinary cases.

The duty of the custom-house of Cumana, is performed by two corporals and twelve guards.

At Carupano in the province of Cumana, there is a post occupied by one corporal and six guards, whose

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vigilance should extend also, over the jurisdiction of St. Philippe d'Autriche, or Cariaco.

Four horse guards overlook the environs of Saint Jean Baptiste.

At the salt works of Cumana there is one sloop, to which are attached a corporal, a pilot, and six marine guards.

At Barcelona there is one commandant, one first and two second corporals, and fourteen guards. Five or six remain constantly in the harbour with a corporal: the other guards are employed in patroling.

In each of the salt works of Barcelona and of Piritu, there is one guard.

The custom-house of Maracaibo has only five guards, the fort of St. Charles two. One is employed as a porter at the office, and two on the quay to observe whatever is embarked. A sloop, commanded by a corporal and furnished with seven marine guards, is provided to visit the banks which are convenient for landing goods, and the small coves of the lake of Maracaibo.

There is also a patrol of horse, composed of a corporal and six men, who are to guard the coast and the roads which traverse the forests.

Manner of Smuggling.

There are three modes much practised in the contraband trade. In the first, the vessel enters the harbour and an arrangement is made with the guard for landing the most precious and the least bulky articles during the night. It would be impolitic and hazardous to discharge every thing clandestinely, even when

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it were practicable; for it is necessary that the declaration, or entry, made at the custom house, should contain some articles which may justify the voyage. These bargains are effected very easily, and with little expence, by the Spaniard who is accustomed to them.

The second manner is, to obtain from those employed in the custom-house an abatement in measurement, weight, quantity, or valuation. It is not difficult, by this expedient, to save the duties on a third or a half of the cargo, without the knowledge of the principal officers. The bribes and excessive fees, form a considerable part of the expences attending this negotiation: presents make up the balance. But these two methods can be employed only under the Spanish flag: for every foreign flag is repulsed from the port by cannonry, excepting in those rare cases when the circumstances of war render it necessary to impose silence on the prohibitory laws.

The third manner is to unload the contraband goods on a part of the coast distant from frequented ports, and to carry them by land to the place of their destination. This method, more decided and direct than the two former, is also the most dangerous. A risk is hazarded, not only of being taken by the guards, but of suffering damages more or less considerable.

Previous to the departure of the ship for the island where the purchase is to be made, the point of the coast must be chosen where the unlading is to take place; and about the time of return, a sufficient number of men and beasts of burden must attend on the spot, to transport the cargo to the appointed town.

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The proprietor does not behold his merchandises from the moment of debarkation until he receives them in his magazines. The care of avoiding the guards on the road, or of corrupting such as by chance they may meet, is left entirely to men who are paid moderately.

Distances of twenty, thirty, and fifty leagues are traversed in the constant dread of surprise. Forests, rivers, marshes, every thing is crossed according to the season and the dangers, which must be avoided rather than braved. The least uncommon movement which the conductors of the contraband goods perceive in the guards, keeps them for whole weeks in the bosoms of the forests, living merely on wild fruits. They never resume their route unless all the motives for fear are dissipated. In short, after more or less delay, the proprietor beholds the merchandise arrive in the same state that he delivered it. Struck with the constancy and fidelity of the conductors, in such cases were unfaithfulness could not be brought before the tribunals, I have regarded them as prodigies, until examples have taught me that the injured always constitutes himself a judge, and something more, in his own cause. It is this, perhaps, which has contributed to gain the smuggler the blind protection which no Spaniard, rich or poor, refuses him. A vessel driven by a storm on the Spanish coasts is robbed and plundered by the country people, if the cargo is covered by legal papers: they succour and protect it, if contraband.

In the first case, they save the effects to appropriate them to themselves; in the second, to hide them, to

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keep them from the revenue, and to restore them to the proprietor. The government, which in vain enacts the severest laws to counteract this propensity, incessantly invokes the authority of the church to make this considered as a sin which nobody will consider as a fault. Decrees of the king renewed and published at intervals in homilies, order the bishops to announce to the faithful, that smuggling is a mortal sin, which cleaves both to those who favour it, and to those who engage in it; that denunciation is a duty, the neglect of which would be a heinous sin. In short, the confessors are bound to refuse absolution to every smuggler who does not restore to the king the duties of which he has defrauded him. There is no time worse employed than that which the priest spends in making this publication; for there is no act in the whole ecclesiastical liturgy which makes less impression on the Spaniard.

Tribunal for judging Contraband Traders.

All affairs relative to contraband trade are definitively judged by the intendant of Caraccas, on the conclusions of the fiscal and the opinion of his assistant. The least penalty is the loss of all that is confiscated; the heaviest is the loss of all the property of the accused, and the galleys for a specified time. It is in the different gradations of these penalties, that favour and protection, or hatred and vengeance are evinced.

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Commodities best suited to the market of Spanish America.

I should consider my task but imperfectly fulfilled, were I to omit giving some account of the European commodities most in request in the provinces which came under my observation. Not more than a third of the cargoes which arrive from the mother country, particularly those which are exported from Cadiz, where three-fourths of the expeditions for Terra-Firma are formed, are made up of national merchandise; and most frequently they do not contain more than a fourth. The rest is formed of foreign manufactures, which the Cadiz trade draws from different parts of Europe, and which are naturalised by means of duties. France yields to this stock nearly one half, England nearly a fourth, and the Hanse towns the surplus, excepting some gauzes furnished by Italy.

Generally speaking, calicoes are not esteemed by the Spaniards. Nor would they have adopted the use of them during the last war, had it not been for the low price at which they were obtained from the English colonies. Pieces of worked muslin, which used to fetch from thirty-five to forty dollars, were sold during the war as low as from twelve to fourteen: and every thing else of the kind was in proportion. But as the stores are emptied, the price augments, and the use diminishes; and the partiality for linen, which had only been accidentally suspended, resumes all its power. The inhabitants of these parts are more under the influence of such fluctuations and reduction in the

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prices of goods, than those of any other of the Spanish possessions; for although their propensity to luxury be equally great, their means are much inferior.

Thus diamonds, jewelry, and very fine linens sell better, and in greater quantities at Mexico, Peru and Havanna, than they do any where else. At Terra-Firma false diamonds have a sale proportionably greater than the true. Jewelry does not fetch its value there, because the Spanish goldsmiths work in gold and silver at a cheaper rate than the French. The workmanship, it is true, is very inferior, but the appearance is nearly the same, and the lowness of the price atones for every defect. What still more contributes to render jewelry an unsaleable commodity among the Spanish Americans, is the idea they entertain that a pale yellow colour is the only proof of the purity of the gold. Whatever the touchstone may shew, the prejudice rests the same. The goldsmith who proves the gold, always rates that which is heightened in colour at 4 or 5 carats below his pennyweights of pure. They imagine that the difference of colour between the European and American gold is owing to the alloy which the former contains. It is, however, to be observed, that their jewelry in gold never rises above eighteen or nineteen carats, and that for their workmanship in silver, they only use dollars, the standard of which is much below the silver used by our silversmiths.

Laces form also a part of the Spanish dress; those of Flanders obtain the preference; they should be handsome; since, destined to form that part of dress

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which most attracts attention, it is proper that their beauty should announce the opulence which every one, according to his estate, would display. Their sale, however, is not considerable, because the use of them is limited to principal personages and to days of grand ceremony.

The women wear very little lace, but to make up for it, they ornament their veils and their church-going petticoats, with black blond lace from fifteen to twenty inches wide. Narrow blond is used by those who cannot purchase the broad. In this article there is a luxury highly profitable to commerce.

All black stuffs are in great use among the Spaniards, principally serges, prunellas, sattins, and taffeties. The cassocks and mantles of the priests are always of one or other of these four articles, as well as five-sixths of the petticoats used by the women in their devotional exercises.

Within the last ten years the use of thick cloths has become general at Caraccas and its dependencies. There are few whites who are not dressed in ash coloured or blue cassimere, or in Elbeuf or Abbeville cloth.

Hats have also considerable sale among the Spaniards. There are no whites except of the lower class, or boys, who wear round hats. All the civil and military officers wear cocked hats; the priests content themselves with giving to hats with low crowns and wide brims a turn which makes them resemble a tile.

French hats are universally preferred to those of other manufactures.

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The young Spaniards have lately acquired a taste for boots, and they have become the ordinary wear; they are bought ready made from the English possessions. The quality of the leather, and the fashion, which the shoemakers of the country cannot imitate, keep up their price, and exempts them from competition. The case is not the same, however, with shoes; it is necessary that those which arrive from abroad should be in excellent condition; nor do they command a very high price, because shoes are made on the spot at a very moderate price, and sufficiently good.

Among the coarse goods the gingas no. 2, the linens of Britany, of Morlaix, Rouens, Platilla, and of Russia, are universally used.

Retail Dealers.

The retail trade in dry goods is in the hands of Canarians, and a few other Spaniards. The usual profits of the retail dealer are from twenty-five to thirty per cent. From this it would appear that there are few trades by which fortunes are more rapidly acquired, and indeed this would be true if all the dealers could secure much custom. But the kind of life induced by this business being of that sedentary description which accords with the Spanish temper, the shops multiply to such a degree, and the sale and profits become so divided, that there does not remain to each retailer more than sufficient to support his family and maintain it with decency. Hence it happens, that this class, which every where else soon rises to the rank of merchant, remains in its original

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state among the Spaniards, and that failures are oftener seen among them than fortunes.

It requires no very deep knowledge of commerce, to discover that these shops could not be furnished were it not for the credit which the merchants are obliged to give.

It rarely happens that a retail dealer pays for what he purchases on delivery; on the contrary, the expiration of the time of credit generally finds him unprepared. On a little extension of credit, however, he satisfies every demand; for it is observed that this class are distinguished above most others for their honesty.

There are also in Terra-Firma a species of shops known under the name of *bodegas*, and others under that of *pulperias*. Their commodities consist of china ware, pottery, glass, hardware, tools, wines, sugar, hams, dried fruits, cheese, tafia, &c. They have an advantage over the other shops, in not being obliged to remain closed on festival days and sundays. In consequence of their great use and convenience they are allowed to remain open from day break until nine in the evening. This trade is almost exclusively in the hands of active and economical unmarried Catalonians and Canarians; and as it consists in frail and perishable articles, it is liable to damages which must be covered by the profits of its sales; there is not, therefore, an article sold at less than a hundred per cent. profit, and some often double and treble that amount. It is in this painful and disgusting traffic, that the beginnings of fortunes are much more frequently laid than in any other business.

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Consulate.

Until a very late period all commercial affairs were carried before the ordinary tribunals, and subjected to the same formalities, delays and expences as other causes. Don Estevan de Leon, the intendant of Caraccas, suggested to the planters of Caraccas, the idea of soliciting the king for a consulate, and he supported it with all his credit and talents. In consequence of this application, founded on public interest and commercial prosperity, a decree passed on the 3d of June, 1793, which established at Caraccas a tribunal of commerce, composed of the intendant, who is the president, of a prior and two consuls, of nine counsellors and a syndic, with their deputies; together with an assessor, a secretary and a register, and two porters, who were to be whites.

Its members, excepting the latter five, do not retain their office more than two years; half of the removeable members are renewed each year by election, the well-regulated mode of which is prescribed by the instituting decree. That of the 4th of September, 1795, has fixed the period of elections on the 5th of January of each year.

Conditions of Eligibility.

Marquises, counts, barons, nobles, knights of military orders, cultivators, annuitants, merchants, in a word, every white, excepting ecclesiastics, who lives honourably is eligible.

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The arms of the consulate of Caraccas are the same as those of the city, surrounded by the attributes of institution.

Appointments.

The salaries at first assigned were, six hundred dollars per annum for a prior; four hundred for each of the consuls; three hundred for a syndic; eight hundred for a secretary, and three hundred for a writer; five hundred for the assessor; four hundred for a register; and one hundred and eighty for each porter; but, by an act of the 12th of January, 1796, the king increased the salary of a prior to sixteen hundred dollars; of each consul to fourteen hundred; of a syndic to twelve hundred; of a secretary to fourteen hundred, independent of the provision for a clerk; of an assessor to fifteen hundred; of a register to a thousand, besides three hundred for a clerk; and of each porter to three hundred.

Revenues

The funds for defraying these expences, as well as any other sums which the consulate may order to be laid out for the benefit of agriculture and commerce, arise from the fines imposed by the consulate itself, and by its deputies and the judges of appeal, and from an average duty of one per cent. on all articles exported or imported to or from Europe, and to or from other parts of Spanish America, and three per cent. on all those exported or imported to or from foreign

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colonies, except mules and horses, which pay a dollar per head; horned cattle pay only one per cent, while negroes, and gold and silver coin, are exempt.

The island of Margaretta enjoys an exemption from this contribution. It is collected in all the ports, by the custom-houses; but the proceeds, on the receipts of the prior, are paid into the coffers of the consulate, without being comprehended in the general statement of receipts. This duty amounts to from eighty to a hundred thousand dollars per annum. The administration of the finances, which is at the disposal of the consulate, is confided to a paymaster and a treasurer, who have each fourteen hundred dollars a year. Their proceedings are altogether subject to the orders and decisions of a prior and two consuls.

Jurisdiction.

The principal object of the establishment of the consulate at Caraccas, has been the administration of justice in commercial affairs.

It takes cognizance of all disputes which arise between the merchants or retail dealers and their associates and deputies, on matters relating to commerce, such as purchases, sales, exchanges, assurances, partnership-accounts, freight of vessels, in a word, of every thing recognised by the consulate of Bilboa, the ordinances of which should serve as rules to that of Caraccas. An order of the king, dated the 31st of July, 1795, assigns to the consulate of Caraccas, all causes relating to damages, or bargains contracted

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between the captains of merchant vessels, and merchants interested in their freight and cargoes. The tribunal is composed solely of the prior and consuls. If either of them is connected with or related to one of the two parties, he is not permitted to give his voice, and the other two are competent to give judgment. In case of long absence or the sickness of any one of the judges, his deputy supplies his place.

The integrity, intelligence and punctuality of the members who alternately compose this tribunal, are truly admirable. It is the most valuable institution that the king could possibly have given to the inhabitants of these colonies

Form of Procedure.

The form of procedure is simple, expeditious and without expence. The public sittings are on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday of each week, one of which days the prosecutor appears and briefly states his case. The defendant is immediately cited to appear. The allegations on each side are then heard, the witnesses present examined, and all written documents inspected. The judges endeavour to bring the affair to an amicable termination. If they fail of success the parties are ordered to withdraw, and sentence is passed; which after being signed by the judges and registrar is made known to the parties. This sentence is final in all cases under eight hundred dollars. Should the cause, however, be too complicated for verbal explanation the parties are permitted, on the demand of one of them, to deliver in, but with-

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out the assistance of a lawyer, a statement in writing, with the papers necessary to support it; and the judges can oblige the party who presents it to swear that no advocate has been concerned in drawing it up.

When the sum exceeds 800 dollars, an appeal lies from the sentence of the consulate to a tribunal called *alzadas**, composed of the intendant and two judges whom he nominates. But if the sentence includes a fine or penalty, or if the personal honour of the defendant be affected, the king has ordered by a decree of the 21st September, 1796, that the appeal should lie whatever may have been the sum contained in the condemnation.

Deputies of the Consulate.

The jurisdiction of the consulate includes the whole of the captain-generalship of Caraccas; but for the greater convenience of the inhabitants, deputies are appointed in the ports of Maracaïbo, Coro, Porto-Cavello, Cumana, Guayra, and Margaretta, to whom his majesty accords the power of judging all commercial causes, with the assistance of two persons whom they nominate themselves. Their authority continues for two years. In the other towns and villages, the ordinary judges exercise the jurisdiction of the consulate and its deputies. The decisions of these deputies and of the ordinary tribunals may, like those of the consulate, be carried by appeal to the tribunal

* Court of Appeal.

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of the *alzadas*, with this difference, that the sum of 800 dollars, to which the decree of the consulate is final, be reduced, by the decree of 14th September, 1795, to 200 dollars for the decision of the deputies established at Cumana, Porto-Cavello and Maracaïbo; to 100 dollars for Guiana, Varinas and Coro; and to 50 for the island of Margaretta and other places. The same decree permits an appeal from the deputies and ordinary judges to the consulate. In case the sentence be confirmed, it becomes definitive; but if it be revoked or modified, an appeal may be made to the tribunal of the *alzadas*.

Assembly of the Consulate.

Besides meeting in its judicial capacity, the consulate holds an assembly twice a month, at which the governor presides. It is composed of the prior, the two consuls, their assistants, the syndic, and their respective deputies, a secretary, paymaster and treasurer. The members who absent themselves from the assembly without sufficient excuse, are each time subjected to a fine of 20 dollars.

Its Prerogatives.

The decree of creation appoints that every thing relative to the progress of agriculture, the prosperity of commerce, &c. should be discussed in these assemblies, to which the deputies and the citizens should contribute their observations. The assembly of the consulate is expressly charged by the king to

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render him an account of every thing which it considers worthy of royal attention, and to propose to him such measures as it believes conducive to the encouragement of agriculture, the industry and the commerce of the country.

The 23d article of the same decree contains a special recommendation to the assembly of the consulate, 1. To be duly impressed with the necessity of constructing good roads from Guayra to Caraccas, from Caraccas to the vallies of Aragoa, and from Porto-Cavello to Valencia, in order that the facility of communication may render the transportation of produce easier and less expensive. 2. To have the port of Guayra cleared, and a quay constructed, that the ladings and unladings may be performed without damage. 3. To render navigable those rivers which may serve for the transportation of produce, such as the Tuy and the Yaracuy, as well as those which discharge themselves into the Oronoko.

From the organization of this assembly, and the nature of the subjects submitted to its deliberations, it may be seen, that the king expected much information would be derived from it, and that Terra Firma might expect important advantages from its establishment. In consequence of the obligation imposed on it to propose measures for the improvement of agriculture as well as commerce, it became the arbiter of the prosperity of the country; by the right which it had of corresponding directly with the king, and of transmitting to him an account of whatever transpired in the provinces, calculated to thwart his benevolent views, it became necessarily the overseer of all the

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local authorities. It was originally designed to operate as an encouragement to industry, and a terror to abuses of every kind. It proves, however, at present to be neither the one nor the other; because its original members, little sensible of the importance of their functions, or ignorant of the management of public affairs, or shackled by particular considerations, or, perhaps, influenced by all these motives, regarded their nomination to this assembly only as a favour purely honorary, and not as an appointment in which they would have to develope their talents, their care and their watchfulness for the public good. Their successors have found imitation easier than reform. Thus, an institution, from which the happiness of the citizens, and the prosperity of the country ought to proceed, was from its infancy, and always will be, a decrepid and useless body, from which the body politic will never have any thing either to hope or to apprehend.

I cannot avoid expressing here the feelings I experienced when I first beheld the decree for the establishment of the consulate. What struck me most was its date. I could not have conceived that, in the month of June, 1793, when the effects of the French revolution afforded the most melancholy proofs of the danger to be apprehended from deliberative assemblies, the king of Spain would have established one at Caraccas, composed of twenty-nine persons periodically replaced by popular election; that he should invest them with the right of discussing and deliberating in the same manner as the popular assemblies; above all that he should establish such a political insti-

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tution in one of the finest of the Spanish possessions, where a similar establishment had never been seen. I wish to pay that just tribute of admiration to the boldness, the wisdom, and the benevolence of this measure, to which it is entitled.

I had hoped that the examination of the first operations of the assembly would have supplied food to prolong and heighten my enthusiasm. But, having with difficulty found means to ascertain its labours in favour of agriculture, I discovered they consisted merely in having, in 1797, required some enlightened cultivators to transmit them memoirs respecting the mode of cultivation which each of them pursued; and these have remained four years in the hands of commissioners appointed to examine them, and to draw up a general report; which has never been done nor since required of them. Desirous of viewing these memoirs, I found them covered with dust, at the house of Count de la Grange, one of the commissioners. He lent them to me with great readiness. After having read them, I returned them to him, and I venture to assert, that centuries will elapse before they will be again displaced.

Is it possible a people thus careless can with justice charge the laws or the government with the tardiness or the nullity of their progress in the arts and sciences? What more praise-worthy could the king of Spain have done than to order the citizens to contribute their information to the public welfare? Men whose torpid and sluggish dispositions prefer the repose and indolence of poverty, to the activity of fortune, should never complain of misfortune or indigence.

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The only useful undertaking which the consular assembly of Caraccas has performed since its creation, is a new road, not yet finished, from Porto-Cavello to Valencia, much shorter, less mountainous, but by no means so handsome as the former. Another road has also been opened, by its direction, from Guayra to Caraccas, which goes round the mountain that separates these two towns; it will be longer than that which is at present in use, but infinitely more convenient; it is on this account that the government of Caraccas are so little anxious to hasten its completion, for reasons which have already been stated under the article of *Armed Force*, chapter V.

The roads of Caricagoa, and the communication of Caraccas with the vallies of Aragoa, have also attracted the attention of this assembly, and have cost much money, without producing benefits commensurate with the expences. Finally, to the consulate is owing the construction of a map of a part of the province where cultivation requires the most encouragement. Such is the whole work of twelve years, during which the system of agriculture ought to have been sufficiently improved to have considerably increased the productions, while, on the contrary, they have experienced the most alarming decrease.

I certainly will not accuse the consular assembly of Caraccas with having been the direct cause of the decline which has taken place in the commerce of the provinces (it proceeds from other causes); but neither must it expect to obtain praise for its zeal, to which neither its success nor its measures give it any pretensions. That the reader may himself judge of

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the commercial state of the provinces of Caraccas, it is proper to lay before him the exportations made in the four years from 1793 to 1796, compared with those of the four following years.

Exportations from 1793 *to* 1796.

		Dollars.	
367,819 q.	Cacao, at 18 dolls.	6,620,742	12,252,415
2,955,963 lb.	Indigo, at 12 reals,	5,172,937	
1,498,332 lb.	Cotton, at 20 reals,	299,666	
1,325,584 lb.	Coffee, at 12 dolls. the q.	159,070	

Exportations from 1796 *to* 1800.

		Dollars.	
239,162 q.	Cacao, at 18 dolls.	4,304,916	6,442,318
793,210 lb.	Indigo, at 14 reals,	1,386,117	
2,834,254 lb.	Cotton, at 20 dolls.	566,850	
1,536,967 lb.	Coffee, at 12 dolls. the q.	184,435	

Diminution - Dollars 5,810,097

I know that it is easier to charge this decrease to the war, than to agree that it is partly the consequence of a bad administration. In admitting that this cause has some weight, it is unjust and ridiculous to be satisfied with a reason which can operate but in a trifling degree. War has no influence except on the price of produce; it cannot injure the productions otherwise than by depriving agriculture of the hands which it requires, and this has not taken place in these provinces, excepting with a few hundred of free men of colour, whom the defence of the country has retained in detachments in the sea ports; this circumstance could never have occasioned an annual diminution in the quantity of produce, to the

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amount of 100,000 dollars. Neither could the war alter the value of productions; they have borne the same price in the four unfavourable years as in the four preceding, and the indigo in one of the former, was at 14 reals a pound, instead of 12.

This equality of price during the eight years in question, is the best proof that there have always been purchasers, and that commerce has always received and paid for what the cultivator has been able to deliver it, cacao only excepted.

It is not, therefore, in war merely, that we must seek for the cause of the languor into which the provinces of Caraccas have fallen; it cannot be ascribed to any scourge, to any calamity, such as plagues, epidemics, droughts, or extraordinary inundations. Providence has guaranteed Terra-Firma from such misfortunes. We must, therefore, impute it to injurious local dispositions, to the carelessness of those who are specially charged by the king himself, to discover and denounce abuses, to unveil vices, and propose the means of destroying them.

The king would sooner achieve his object, in leaving to the consulate such matters only as relate entirely to trade, which it treats with a laudable zeal, and in substituting, as has been proposed in the preceding chapter, a chamber of agriculture, similar in every respect to that which we have in our colonies.

I have promised to terminate this chapter by a detail of the duties which are imposed on entering and leaving the different ports, in the extent of the captain-generalship of Caraccas. This is the proper moment to fulfil my promise.

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Statement of the duties paid in the ports of the dependency of the captain-generalship of Caraccas, on all articles arriving directly from Spain, from the Canary islands, and from Majorca, and on produce freighted in return for the same destinations.

Province of Venezuela.—(Major Ports.)

On Entry.

For the duty of Almoxarifazgo.	Foreign merchandises,	7 per cent.
	Merchandise of contribution	3
	Do. free	—
	Silks 5 sous per lb.	—
Sea alcavala,		4
Corso,		3
Consulate,		1

(N. B. See the nature of all these duties in the Chapter entitled Finance.)

For clothes and arms of the militia,		—
Per barrel of brandy,	Dollar	1
Per do. of wine,		0 50

On Departure.

Duties of Armada and of Armadilla united,	2 per cent.
Ditto for each quintal of cacao,	6 reals of 8
For each hide,	½ real
Tanned sheep skins per dozen,	1½
For a quintal of cheese and fish	½
Do. of Sarsaparilla,	1
Do. Brasil wood,	½
Do. tobacco of Varinas,	—
Do. of Caraccas,	—
Corso,	3 per cent.
Consulate,	1

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Observations.

1. For the collecting of the above duties of entry, the receivers add eight per cent. to the value specified in the invoices after that fixed by the statute of free commerce, of the 12th of October, 1778. This augmentation is conformable to the 21st Article of the same statute. Free articles and articles of contribution are only exempt from the duty of almoxarifazgo; they pay all the other duties.

2. According to the order of the king of the 24th March, 1779, the provisions of vessels should pay, according to their species, the same royal and municipal duties as if they made a part of the cargoes.

3. The collection of duties specified in the regulation formed in 1641, by the paymaster Melchor Candario, or what arrived from Spain and the Canaries, was suspended in this province, from the time that they commenced to execute the royal *project* of the 20th of April, 1720.

By the statute of free commerce of 1778, and the royal order of the 27th of December of the same year, the trade of the Canaries was, in every respect, similar to that of Spain and Majorca; instead of a half real paid indiscriminately for every hide, there is at present imposed, in the principal ports, three-quarters of a real for each hide, or one real for an ox hide, and a half real for that of a cow, and only two per cent. on the value of tobacco of Varinas and Venezuela.

4. Indigo, cotton, coffee, sugar, meats salted or

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dried, tallow, flax, hemp, and the wood for the cathedral of the Canaries, are exempt on departure, from the duties of armada and armadilla, and must only pay the municipal duties of the corso and the consulate. The sugar of Venezuela, which has already paid by the cultivators, the land alcavala, pays, besides one per cent. to complete the six per cent. to which it is subjected by a decree of the intendance of the 28th of June, 1799.

5. The productions of Cumana and Guiana which are embarked in the ports of Venezuela for Spain, Majorca or the Canaries, pay the same duties as if they departed directly from these provinces; but then it is necessary to conform to what has been said in the preceding article, for the duties which the sugar pays in these same provinces. The productions of Varinas, transported to Guiana, should be considered as if they originated at Guiana. (Order of the king of the 17th of August, 1792.)

Provinces of Cumana and Guiana. (Minor Ports)

On Entry.

Corso,	1½ per cent.
Consulate	1

On Departure.

Corso,	2 per cent.
Consulate,	1

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Observations.

1. According to the 21st Article of the statute of free commerce, the value of property contained in the invoice is augmented to five per cent. The duties of armada and armadilla united having been declared royal duties by the intendance, the 28th of June, 1799, they are not collected on the produce of Cumana and of Guiana.

2. Provisions destined for the consumption of crews and passengers, pay, on entry and departure, the municipal duties, as has been said in the 2d article of observations relative to the ports of Venezuela.

3. The assembly of commerce of the 25th of May, 1793, added one per cent. to the two per cent, collected for the maintenance of coast guards, on every thing which left Guayra and arrived there from Spain; but, this supplement not being extended to other ports, they have continued only to collect two per cent. at Cumana and Guiana for the duty of Corso.

4. The productions of Venezuela and of Maracaïbo which go to Spain by the ports of Cumana and Guiana, should pay the same duties as if they issued directly from the ports of their provinces. Therefore, as is mentioned in the fourth Article of observations on the ports of Venezuela, there must be paid one per cent. of supplement of the land alcavala on the sugar of Venezuela, but not on that of Maracaïbo, for reasons contained in the following article.

5. Sugar coming from the provinces which have minor ports privileged, enjoys an exemption from

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royal duties, and consequently does not pay the supplement of the land alcavala if it comes from Cumana or Guayra, according to the declaration of the intendance of the 26th of June, 1799. (See what has been said in the fifth Article of preceding observations on the produce of Varinas.)

Province of Maracaïbo. (Mixed Port)

On Entry.

Corso, - - - -	2 per cent.
Consulate, - - -	1

On Departure.

Armada and armadilla united, -	2 dollars
For the same duties which are paid at the port of Guayra, Corso, - -	2
Consulate, - - -	1

Observations.

1. The amount of the invoices is augmented five per cent. to make the estimate on which the duties are collected. And as to the provisions of vessels, see the second Article of the observations on the ports of Venezuela.

2. The order of the king of the 25th of May, 1793, specifies that the productions of Maracaïbo, destined for Spain, shall pay the same duties as those which are levied at Guayra. Thus, every thing that leaves the port of Maracaïbo for Spain, Majorca,

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or the Canaries, pays the duty of armada or armadilla. The sugar only does not, like that of Venezuela, pay the supplement of one per cent. of alcavala, for reasons expressed in Article V. of observations relative to Cumana and Guayra.

3. The productions of Cumana and Guiana embarked at Maracaïbo for Spain, the Canaries and Majorca, only pay, on departing, the same duties that they would pay if they issued directly from their respective ports.

4. According to the assembly of commerce of the 26th of June, 1799, the duty of corso must not be collected at Maracaïbo, except at the rate of two per cent.

5. As to commodities proceeding from Varinas, *see* Article V. of observations on Cumana and Guayra.

Statement of royal and municipal duties collected in the ports of the captain-generalship of Caraccas, on every thing reciprocally sent from one port to another of the Spanish possessions.

Province of Venezuela.

On Departure.

For the major and minor ports within the jurisdiction, or out of the captain-generalship of Caraccas.

Almoxarifasgo, - - - - -	2 per cent.
Armada and armadilla, - - - -	2
For each quintal of cacao, - - - -	6 reals
For each hide, - - - - - -	½

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For a dozen tanned sheep skins - -	3
For a dozen of deer skins, - - -	1½
For a dozen of cheese and fish, - -	½
For a quintal of wool and sarsaparilla,	4 reals
For a quintal of Brazil wood, - -	½
For a quintal of Varinas tobacco, -	12
For a quintal of Caraccas do. -	6
Corso, - - - - - - -	2 per cent.
Consulate, - - - - - -	1

On Entry.

(Major Ports.)

Almoxarifazgo, - - - -	5 per cent.
Armada and armadilla, - - -	4
Sea alcavala, - - - - -	2
Corso, - - - - - -	2
Consulate, - - - - -	1

(Minor Ports.)

Corso, - - - - - - -	2 per cent.
Consulate, - - - - - -	1

Observations.

1. Mules, horses, cattle and sheep, destined for the Spanish possessions, pay but four per cent. in place of the almoxarifazgo, and the duty of corso, conformably to the order of the king, of the 25th of January, 1793, and the declaration of the intendant of the 22d of March, in the same year.

2. The municipal duties of corso and of consulate are paid but once, on entry or departure from the

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ports dependent on Caraccas. The articles of mutual supply between the provinces are exempt therefrom, according to the assembly held for the establishment of the first mentioned duty, and the different orders of the king; but as there is not a perfect understanding as to the articles which should be ranked in this class, the intendancy has been consulted, but has not hitherto given a decision. The order of the king of the 17th of August, 1792, states that the commodities of Varinas going to Guiana, should be considered as mutual supplies, and consequently are exempt.

3. Every thing which has been directly sent from Spain, Majorca or the Canaries, to Maracaïbo, Cumana, Guiana, or other major or minor ports, out of the district of the intendancy, and shall afterwards be introduced into the province of Venezuela, must pay the same duties as if this destination had been given it on leaving Europe, excepting the municipal duties, which are never imposed a second time, if it is proved that they have previously been collected in one of the ports of the district.

4. Articles which enter the larger ports of Venezuela, from Spain, Majorca and the Canaries, pay no duties on re-exportation to the larger ports of America; and if this second destination is made for the lesser ports, the duties paid on entrance at Venezuela are refunded, and the declaration of the intendancy of 14th April, 1801, conformably to the royal order of 25th July, 1801; provided the merchandise has not changed its owner, and the re-exportation is not on account of a new purchaser.

5. According to the declaration of the intendancy,

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dated 10th December, 1795, the provisions of vessels pay the same duties as if they made part of the cargoes.

6. Salted or dried meat, tallow and sugar, if they are not to leave the district, pay the duties of entrance and departure, established with regard to provinces under the jurisdiction of the intendancy. But when they are exported beyond the limits of the district, the duties of the land alcavala, of the corso, and of the consulate, must be paid; besides one per cent. on sugar, to make up the complement of six per cent. to which that article is subject, according to the declaration of the intendancy of 28th June, 1799.

7. The rum of Venezuela, having paid the royal duty established in the provinces, has neither royal nor municipal duty to pay on entrance or departure. But rum which comes from places not dependent on the intendancy, must pay all the duties imposed on other produce, according to the ports from which it arrives; with the addition of one dollar royal duty for each barrel of twenty-six flaggons, according to the decree of the intendancy of 22d June, 1799.

8. Salt from the pits to windward of Guayra, pays only the royal duty established at one dollar per quintal, half payable at the moment of collecting it, and the other half at its introduction. The salt from the pits situate to leeward, pays only the alcavala of their sale, notwithstanding that, by decree of the intendancy, dated 26th June, 1799, the general custom observed on this article, was ordered to be followed in the ports of the district.

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Provinces of Maracaïbo, Cumana, and Guiana.

On departure.

(For the larger or smaller ports of different Spanish possessions.)

Corso, - - - -	2 per cent.
Consulate, - - -	1

On Entrance.

(For the larger ports.)

These duties are the same with those paid in the ports of Venezuela; but see the first article of the following observations.

(For the smaller.)

Corso, - - - -	2 per cent.
Consulate, - - -	1

Observations.

1. The officers of the customs have inquired of the intendant whether the productions of the larger ports must pay on their entrance into the smaller ports the royal duties established for the reciprocal commerce of the Spanish American continent. His decision has not been received. If it be in the affirmative, they must conform to the regulation established for different objects, as mentioned in the fifth article of the

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preceding observations, and in the third of those on the commerce of Spain with Venezuela.

2. Since mules, horses, cattle and sheep pay only four per cent. in lieu of the almoxarifazgo, as has been already said; and as the almoxarifazgo is a royal duty, it has also been inquired whether the exportation for the smaller ports can be made without payment of royal or municipal duties; the question is still undecided.

3. The remarks concerning salt and rum in the seventh and eighth articles of the preceding observations, extend also to exports and imports made by the ports of Cumana, Maracaïbo, and Guiana.

4. Here refer to the arrangements contained in the second article of the preceding observations on the produce of Varinas.

5. The provisions of vessels are considered, with respect to duties, as making part of the cargoes.

Statement of royal and municipal duties paid at the ports within the district of the intendancy of Caraccas, for commerce permitted in time of peace with foreign colonies.

On Departure.

1st. On condition of bringing Blacks.

Almoxarifazgo,	6 per cent.
Corso,	2
Consulate,	3

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2d. On condition of bringing Gold, Silver, implements of Agriculture, and Plantation utensils.

Almoxarifazgo,	- - -	15 per cent.
Corso,	- - - -	2
Consulate,	- - -	3

3d. Export of Live Stock, to bring in return Negroes, or Money.

Almoxarifazgo,	- - -	5 per cent.
Corso,	- - - -	2
Consulate,	For a mule or horse, -	1
	do. cattle or sheep, -	1
	For other articles, -	3

4th. Export of Live Stock, on condition of bringing in return implements of Agriculture, and household utensils.

Almoxarifazgo,	- - -	15 per cent.
Corso,	- - - -	2
Consulate,	For a mule or horse, -	1
	do. cattle or sheep, -	1
	For other articles, -	3

On Entrance.

1. Negroes pay neither royal nor municipal duty on entrance: see, however, the first, third and fourth articles of the following observations.

2. Gold and silver pay nothing on their entrance; other articles pay:

Almoxarifazgo,	- - -	15 per cent.
Corso,	- - - -	2
Consulate,	- - -	3

3. The introduction of negroes, gold, and silver,

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is exempt from all duties: see article 2d, 3d, and 4th, of the following observations.

4. Implements of agriculture, cylinders, and plantation utensils pay:

Almoxarifazgo, - - -	15 per cent.
Corso, - - - -	2
Consulate, - - - -	3

Observations.

1. When produce is exported under condition of bringing negroes in return, but from the impracticability of procuring them in foreign colonies, its value has been returned in gold or silver, nine per cent. almoxarifazgo is paid, to make up the complement of fifteen per cent. which should have been paid on departure. If, in place of blacks, the value of the cargo has been employed in procuring implements of agriculture and plantation utensils, all the royal and municipal duties established on the entrance of these articles must be paid in addition.

2. When the produce of animals exported under condition of returning negroes has been brought in gold or silver, the difference of almoxarifazgo that would otherwise have been paid at departure, is not exacted. But if the return is made in implements of agriculture or household utensils, the difference is exacted, which is ten per cent. more than the duties imposed on these articles at their entrance.

3. If part of the proceeds of animals or produce exported on condition of returning negroes, has been employed in purchase of a vessel, under the permis-

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sion of the intendant for her introduction, the difference of almoxarifazgo is collected only on the value of the produce, and not of the other articles. This is estimated in proportion to the sum exported, with which the sum employed in the purchase corresponds, taking the dollar of the colonies for the Spanish dollar. The vessel is entirely exempt from royal and municipal duties, by an order of the king, dated July the 25th, 1794.

4. Though a person should show that he has employed a part of the sum in repairing his vessel, or in defraying the expences of his crew, the supplement of duty is still exacted. No exemption is permitted but for expences of absolute necessity, such as the maintenance of the captain, storage, commissions, and others of a similar nature.

5. All provisions embarked for the support of the crew, and of passengers, are subject to the same royal and municipal duties as if they were part of the cargo, according to the declaration of the intendant, dated June 28, 1799.

6. Sugar embarked for the colonies pays only the municipal duties of corso, and of the consulate, with one per cent. land alcavala, to complete the amount of six per cent. agreeably to the same declaration.

7. Some officers of the custom-house demanded of the intendancy whether the royal cedule of the 24th November, 1791, which permits the free introduction of negroes both to foreigners and Spaniards, should be regarded as ceasing to operate after the 21st December, 1797. The superior assembly of the finances decreed, on the 20th February, 1800, that

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the cedule preserves its validity with respect to Spaniards; but that, according to the decision of his Catholic Majesty, foreigners must pay all the royal and municipal duties imposed on other articles, which make part of the commerce permitted with strangers.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE REVENUE AND THE TAXES.

A summary view of the finances of the provinces of Caraccas—The establishment of the office of comptroller or intendant—The governor of each province—His deputy—His duties and prerogatives—The superior officers of the custom-house—The court of accounts—The supreme chamber of finance—The taxes—Duty of the alcavala—Of the almoxarifazgo, armada, and armadilla—Of the consulate and anchorage—Of the approvechamientos rum or tafia—Customs of the lake—Pulperias or licences to retail liquor—Compositions, or sales of land—Confirmations of land—Fermage or rents of land—Passage boats on the river Apine—Lances, or tax on titles—Demi-annates of officers—Royal ninths—Indian tribute—Venal offices—Stamped paper—Estrays—Fifths of mines—Hospital money—Salt-works—Restitutions—Confiscations—Royal tithes—Corso—Guarapo and cock fights—Fines and amercements—Vacant successions—Ecclesiastical mesadas—Vacant benefices—Papal bulls—The general bull for the living—The bull for eating milk—The bull for the dead—The bull of composition—Rate of bulls—Monopoly of tobacco—Result.

Summary of the finances of the Provinces of Caraccas.

FROM the particulars I have given in the preceding chapter, of the languishing state of the provinces of Caraccas, even in the middle of the last century, the reader will not expect that the history of their finances should ascend to a very remote period.

Mexico and Peru, out of the vast extent of Spanish domain, are the only portions which, since their discovery, have furnished a superabundance of wealth. Out of this surplus, after defraying the interior charges of administration, Spain has always appropriated a part in favour of those governments whose local resources are inadequate to their expence. The provinces of Terra-Firma were a tax upon Mexico, until a more active culture, and a people less ad-

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dicted to illicit trade enabled the exchequer to find within their limits the means of dispensing with foreign aid. If this revolution in the treasury be not entirely owing to the company of Guipuscoa, it is at least during its existence that it has begun to take effect. For, before the establishment of that society, Maracaïbo, Caraccas, and Cumana received from Mexico a sum equivalent to two-thirds of their expenditures.

Establishment of the office of Intendant, or Comptroller, in the Caraccas.

In a country where finance was in its infancy its regulations could not but be simple. As the persons in office were few, their competitors were few also. In the person of the captain-general, the united powers of the civil and military administration were concentrated. The increase of the receipts intimated that the time was arrived when it was necessary to give to the management of the public revenue a system more suitable to its importance. The number of persons employed was necessarily augmented. At length in 1777 they placed at the head of the finances an intendant whose authority extends over the whole district of the captain-general.

The Governors of the Provinces are his Deputies.

Under the title of delegates of the intendant, the governors of the different provinces have continued to administer the public money within their respec-

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tive jurisdictions. They direct all the ordinary expences, but without the concurrence of the intendant they are unable to authorise any extraordinary expenditure. They determine provisionally on all difficulties arising within their limits on the collection of duties, with a right of appeal to the intendant, and upon condition, in case none should be interposed, of submitting the decision to his sanction. It is to him, also, that they transmit, at the expiration of each year, a general statement of their receipts and disbursements.

The duties and prerogatives of the Intendant.

The intendant is totally independent of the other authorities. Every regulation which he may deem necessary or expedient for the interior government of the finances in his district, he has power to ordain. He is superior to every branch of the administration. No payment is made by the treasury of Caraccas without his order. To every office in the administration, which becomes vacant, he nominates provisionally. Those who behave improperly he removes at his pleasure. He arraigns, tries and pronounces definitively upon all non-attendances or neglects. But if the offence be of such a nature as, on the merits, to admit of a reversal, he restores the person *ad interim,* (or in the meanwhile) and sends the proceedings to the king for his decision. The intendant continues in office five years.

Litigated points, on every part of the administration, are referred to a gentleman of the law, who en-

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joys the title of associate* or lateral judge of the royal estates, or finances. On the conclusions of the solicitor of the exchequer, he passes his decree; but it has no effect until signed by the intendant, who may, under his responsibility, pronounce a different sentence, or submit the pleadings to another professional character for his opinion. Smuggling, and prize cases are also within the cognisance of the intendant, and determined in the same manner.

The appeal from his judgment is to the supreme chamber of finance, of which I shall hereafter speak. At these times, instead of the intendant, who on other occasions presides, the regent of audience fills the chair.

Agriculture, commerce and navigation are under the intendant's immediate patronage. It is to these three grand sources of public prosperity that he is bound to direct his greatest care and attention. But with respect to agriculture he has no authority to make any regulation. His power is confined to transmitting to the king his observations on the measures to be adopted for its encouragement.

In regard to commerce and navigation he is not thus restrained: for he may, without any responsibility, repress the abuses he perceives, or issue ordinances for improving their system.

In constituting him president of the general assembly of the consulate, and judge of appeal from their sentences, it appears that the king intended he should possess a decided influence over those affairs which

* Literally *assessor*.

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form the duties of this tribunal, created solely to give an impulse to excite industry and animate pursuit in commercial and maritime operations.

The town furnishes a guard for the house of the intendant, and he receives from the military the honours of a field-marshal. His fixed salary is, like that of the captain-general, 9000 hard dollars a year. His proportion of seizures for illicit trade and his other emoluments, double that sum.

Superior Officers of the Customs.

In all the principal custom-houses there are a cashier, or contador, and treasurer, who bear the title of royal officers, and whose duties are, with very little variation, the same. The cashier keeps a separate register, which the treasurer is to subscribe, and not the cashier that which the treasurer also keeps. In the choice of apartments the law gives to the treasurer the preference, but he is obliged to reside in the house where the bank is kept.

To all acts of office their joint names are required. In case of sickness, absence, or any other impediment to one, the other signs alone, and his signature is valid provided he expresses the cause which has prevented his associate from subscribing. Each has a key of a different lock to the bank, so that one cannot open it without the concurrence of the other. They give security for their good conduct before they are permitted to enter upon the duties of their office, and every ten years the fortune of the surety is ex-

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amined into anew. If it is supposed to be diminished, instead of suffering any doubts on its solidity to remain, they demand a fresh security.

Themselves, their wives, and their children are prohibited from possessing mines, plantations, or engaging in any species of commerce. The law has been so careful lest the intimacy of their acquaintance might expose their delicacy, that it forbids them to be accompanied in festivals or public ceremonies by any person whatsoever, excepting their servants, under a penalty of fifteen gold crowns from the individual, and ten thousand maravedis from the officer.

To avoid connivances destructive to this liability, every royal officer who marries the relation of his colleague forfeits his place. The mere proposition, whether written or verbal, incurs the penalty.

At the same time that the law has taken all the precautions it could devise to restrain in the royal officer every inclination to waste or neglect, it has assigned to him, in the hierarchy of constituted authorities, a distinguished place, capable of fixing upon him the public respect. In all processions and other grand ceremonies the royal officers rank immediately after the *contadores de cuentas,* who walk and take their seats next to the audience. They communicate directly with the intendant, and submit to him all their doubts. Every month they send him a short statement of their circumstances, and once a year they transmit their general accounts.

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Court of Accounts.

The accounts of the several custom-houses and receivers are subject to the revision and controul of a tribunal, which is denominated *de cuentas*, or of accounts. It is composed of two officers, under the title of *contadores mayores*, or chief auditors, with a salary of 3000 hard dollars a piece. All accounts, before they can be sent to Spain, must be verified by them. They compel the different administrators of the revenue to make good the amount of all money paid on insufficient orders, or not collected according to the rate of duty imposed. They order likewise restitution from him who has taken too much. In a word, they regulate questions of account in every point. Their jurisdiction is co-extensive with that of the intendant.

Supreme Chamber of Finance.

An appeal lies from the decisions of the court of accounts, and intendant, to a supreme chamber of finance, of which he is the president. The other members are the regent of the audience, the solicitor of the exchequer, the most ancient *contador* of accounts, and either the treasurer or cashier of the treasury, according as one or the other may be the oldest. Those persons whose sentences are appealed from, withdraw. Their places are filled by their colleagues, and those of the next inferior rank.

After this succinct description of the administrative authorities in the provinces of Caraccas, one would be

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naturally induced to believe that the management of its finance was perfectly simple, and in the hands of a few; but, to prevent all misconception on this subject, it would be difficult to find a part of the world, excepting Spain, in which the persons employed in collecting the taxes are, in proportion to the amount of the public revenue, so very numerous.

Taxes.

The theory and articles of taxation are in Spanish America nearly the same as in the mother country. The poll and land tax are unknown; but the treasury recompenses itself under so many various denominations, that we are at a loss to determine whether we should most admire the ingenuity of the exchequer, or the resignation of the people. The exemption from colonial taxes the Spanish colonists are unable to appreciate, because the law has removed from them the afflicting picture which in France its ancient mode of collection presented. In the Spanish government the taxes fall only on profit or rent.*

Let us examine their nature, beginning with that of the *alcavala,* as being the most ancient, and most productive of any.

Of the Alcavala.

This tax was granted to the kings of Spain in the year 1342 as a supply towards the expences of the war against the Moors, and particularly for the conquest

* "*Production.*"

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of Algesiras. At first the gift was limited to three years; after which it was prolonged, even subsequent to Algesiras being in the power of Spain. It was originally five per cent. By a decree made at Bengos in 1366 it was augmented to ten per cent. This however was but a temporary act. There never has been, at least I have never seen, any national or royal edict ordaining its perpetual collection. It has no other sanction than the tacit consent of the nation, who, having never objected to its collection, are thought to have classed it among those imposts the sovereign is authorised to levy for the defence and tranquillity of the state. In other respects, the question whether it be or be not due, would be so much the more idle, as an existence of five centuries has given it a character of legality which the most subtle reasonings cannot destroy. It is then at this day a right of the king absolutely annexed to the royal domain. What ancient duty can shew a more respectable origin? The *gabelle*, a tax upon salt only, was established, but for a time, under Philip the Long. The *taille*, or land-tax arose from the project of a second crusade formed by Saint Louis, and was to cease after the expedition. Aids were in the beginning nothing but voluntary tributes of the subject to his king, or of the vassal to his lord in circumstances of pressing necessity. Philip of Valois, being compelled to maintain a war against the English, was the first who rendered them obligatory. The capitation or poll-tax was introduced into France the 16th of January, 1695, only for a temporary supply towards the war which was terminated by the treaty of Ryswick. At the

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peace it was abolished, but re-established in 1710 on account of the war for the Spanish succession, and has experienced no other variation than in the progression of its rate. This species of lure which governments are so often obliged to use, is occasioned only by the reluctance of the citizen to part with a portion of his property to enable the government to secure to him the residue. On his part, this reluctance arises from a wish to enjoy the advantages of society without contributing to its expences. Therefore, as soon as a tax, supported by some powerful reason which no one calls in question, is favourably received by those who pay it, instead of allowing the effect to cease with the cause, it is found more easy and politic to naturalise the impost to which the subject is reconciled, than to offer him another which, however warrantable its object, he would reject or pay with discontent, without recollecting that the new duty is no more than a compensation for the one suppressed. But this is a digression from the alcavala.

Several authors have examined whether this tax, imposed for carrying on a war against the Moors, might legally be established in America where such a cause could never exist; but, as they speak of a thing determined in fact, and not merely projected, they have pronounced in the affirmative. "For," says Baldo, one of the examiners, "the duty of the "alcavala, being recognized by the laws of the king-"dom, may unquestionably, without any new grant, "be immediately established in all possessions sub-"sequently annexed to the Spanish empire." The kings of Spain, however, have never exacted the

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alcavala in their new dominions, until a long time after their conquest. The royal edict, by which it was established in Mexico, bears date in 1574, and that extending this regulation to Peru in 1591. To render its collection more easy, it was at first fixed at two per cent. It has since been augmented in proportion to the necessities of the state and the submission of the people.

In Terra Firma it was for a long time at two per cent.; about fifty years ago they raised it to five. This increase was occasioned by an insurrection which took place at that time against the company of Guipuscoa. From this occurrence, it was thought necessary to entrust the garrison of Caraccas to troops of the line, whom the country were to pay by means of the alcavala.

This tax is collected on every thing which is sold, whether moveable or immoveable, and is rigorously exacted at every sale and resale. An estate, on change of owner by transfer for a valuable consideration, is charged with five per cent. of the purchase-money. A bundle of fire-wood pays the same duty, but in kind. Every species of merchandise, territorial production, animals, poultry, eggs, vegetables, grass, fodder, &c. is subject to this impost the moment it is exposed for sale. Retail dealers compound for it. Every year a valuation is made of the stock, and they calculate five per cent. on the presumed sale. Whether the trader's business be in the course of the year great or little, the composition is invariably enforced.

In a country where the transactions of civil life were more brisk, the exchequer would, in a short time, en-

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tirely absorb the wealth of the community, and reduce the people to the necessity of renouncing all commerce, enterprise and speculation; but, thanks to the local indolence of Caraccas, the *alcavala* takes from the whole government only about 400,000 hard dollars a year.

There is paid also, on entering and clearing from the ports, a tax which is called the maritime *alcavala*. It is only four, instead of five per cent. It produced from these provinces in 1793, 150,862 hard dollars; in 1794, 151,408; in 1795, 105,251; in 1796, 130,644, and in 1797, only 10,248, because in this last year maritime commerce was almost entirely suspended.

Almoxarifazgo.

The Spaniards correctly assimilate this duty to that which the Latins denominated *portoricum*, from its being collected only on what is shipped or landed; that is to say, on entering and clearing. Amongst the Romans it amounted to the eighth part of the article on which it was levied. At the first discovery of America it was fixed at fifteen per cent. on all that went from Spain to the West Indies. They often exempt, for a time or indefinitely, countries the conquest of which they are about to attempt. But, by degrees, it has been universally established. (See, for its rate and manner of collection, the account of taxes inserted at the end of chapter viii.) It produced in 1797 throughout the whole extent of the intendancy of Caraccas, 187,727 hard dollars.

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Armada and Armadilla.

This term which, in its present acceptation, signifies a navy, became the denomination of a tax established to supply the expense of government vessels, which it was necessary to maintain on the coasts of Spanish America, to protect them from the insults of pirates, who, as they met with no opposition, could easily make incursions. Some time after, this defence was committed to small armed vessels, better adapted to keep the coast, and run into the ports and shipping places. This afforded the opportunity of establishing an additional impost, known by the name of *armadilla*, a diminutive of *armada*. Pirates have long ceased to infest these coasts, yet the tax destined to repel them exists and probably will exist until the total subversion of the present system of finance, which it is very possible may endure for some ages yet to come.

The receipts from the first of these impositions amounted in 1797 to 15,415 hard dollars; those of the armadilla to 25,288; but they frequently rise to double. They are collected at the maritime custom-houses.

Duties of the Consulate and Anchorage.

These are received at the maritime custom houses, and their product is accounted for to the consulate, for the payment of its officers, and to employ the surplus in whatever agriculture and commerce may require. (*See*, the article *Consulate*, in chapter viii.)

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Aprovechamientos.

This signifies improvements. The sums which surpass the estimate made of things belonging to the king prior to their sale or disposition, are named *aprovechamientos*. For this purpose they open an account in the treasuries in which they credit for the excess beyond the price estimated, or value assigned to the article, and debit for the deficiency. For example; goods seized in contraband trade being first valued and then sold, furnish to this account the difference between the product of the sale, and the previous estimation. So the stamped paper which remains on hand after the two years for which it is in force, or the excess disposed of, is entered. It is plain that the Spanish government means by *aprovechamientos*, that which a merchant comprehends in the account he opens *to profit and loss*. The balance of the *aprovechamientos*, in favour of the bank was, in 1797, 1970 hard dollars. It rarely exceeds 3000.

Tafias.

The Spanish government obliges all distillers of Tafia to pay one hard dollar per barrel weighing one quintal. It amounted in 1797 to 32,091 hard dollars.

Aduanas de la laguna.

By this appellation is understood a paltry tax collected on the lake Maracaïbo. In 1793, it produced 3867 hard dollars; in 1794, 21; and the three following years nothing.

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Pulperias.

Those shops in which inebriating liquors form the basis of their stock, are named *pulperias*. A certain sum per annum is paid for permission to carry on this branch of trade. For the first licence, the *pulperias* in the principal cities pay thirty hard dollars; those in the country according to their presumed sale. Their subsequent annual payments are considerably less; but this tax affords no dispensation from the *alcavala;* they compound for that besides. The duty on *pulperias* amounted in 1797 to 29,989 hard dollars. Its ordinary product is from 25 to 30 thousand.

Composition of lands.

We have already mentioned, in the VII. chapter, that grants of lands in the Spanish Indies are not made *gratis*, as in our colonies. They are put up at auction, and decreed to the highest bidder. It is the produce of these sales which in the language of finance is denominated *composicion de tierras.*— Lands which from their situation could excite composition having been a long time since granted out, the receipts produced from this kind of sale are consequently of but little importance. In fact they were in 1797 only 5859 hard dollars, the preceding year they amounted to 14,422.

Confirmation of lands.

Independent of the price of the lands, it is necessary, in order to be the legal proprietor, that the con-

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firmation of the intendant who delivers the original title deeds should be obtained. For this there is paid a duty, which is called *confirmacion de tierras;* in it produced 3566 hard dollars.

Rents of lands.

These are the rents of lands belonging to the king. They are confined to the environs of Varinas, and commonly from 30 to 40 hard dollars a year.

Ferry boat on the river Apure.

The rent of this boat, the proceeds of which are paid into the coffers of the king, are about 300 hard dollars per annum.

Lances.

The titles of marquis, count, viscount, or baron, are granted by the king to every Spaniard who is willing to sacrifice a part of his fortune to give his descendants a rank which he has more than once blushed not to have received from his ancestors. Exclusive of the great court patronage which it is requisite to employ, and pay well, the king demands a direct fine of 10,000 hard dollars. He contents himself, however, with the annual interest, if the titled personage does not prefer redeeming it by payment of the principal, and it is this interest which is termed the duty of the *lances.* Its amount increases the annual public revenue from 3 to 4000 hard dollars.

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Demi-annates of offices.

By demi-annates of offices, is understood the moiety of the yearly product of all places whatsoever, which the office is bound to pour into the treasury of the king. In the judicial and administrative departments it is paid but once. He who is promoted to a situation more lucrative, pays the demi-annate of the surplus of his appointment; and if it be titular, the moiety of what it is valued at per annum. Dignities purely honorary pay in the same manner. Magistrates chosen annually are rated at $6\frac{1}{2}$ dollars. Honours, superior to that actually discharged, pay a demi-annate, which is assessed by the council of the Indies. All places of new creation are exempted.

The Royal Ninths,

Are the portion which the king reserves out of the tithes. By the bull of Alexander the VI. the kings of Spain acquired ecclesiastical dominion in the West-Indies, upon condition of making a conquest of the country, and propagating the faith within it. In virtue of this grant, Ferdinand and Isabella, by a royal edict of the 5th of October, 1501, established tithes in all their American possessions. Their product was at first devoted to constructing churches, supporting them, paying those who officiated; in a word, to whatever relates to the catholic worship. Charles the Vth. on the 3d of February, 1541, ordained, that the proceeds of the tithes should be divided into four parts, of which one should be appropriated to the

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bishop, another to the chapter to be divided according to its dignitaries, and that out of the other two, they should take two ninths for the king, three for the foundation of churches and hospitals, and the remaining four ninths for paying curates and other officiating ecclesiastics. Time has induced no other change in this regulation than that of uniting to the four-ninths of the moiety of the tithes, the three-ninths reserved for the construction of churches and hospitals, because places of worship being sufficiently numerous, they now scarcely ever speak of erecting others.

The bishop and chapter have the direction of the tithes so long as they are adequate to their maintenance, and the king is not obliged to furnish any supply from his coffers; but they cannot be leased except before the royal officers, and an *otdor* in those places where a royal audience is held: and even then the decree for that purpose is only on condition that the highest bidding lessee shall pay directly and personally to the royal officers the two-ninths coming to the king. Tithes are paid by all persons, and on every product of the land. It is but five per cent. on sugar, coffee, indigo, and other commodities, which require, before they leave the country, a costly process to give them the form of commercial articles. But it is rigorously ten per cent. on cocoa, cotton, grain, seeds, cassava, lambs, kids, pigs, fowls, green geese, milk, butter, cheese, wool, veal, colts, mules, asses, garden produce, honey, wax, swarms of bees, grapes, olives, and all sorts of fruits excepting pine apples.

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The amount of the tithes has necessarily followed the progress of cultivation. They did not assume any settled condition in the provinces of Caraccas till after the establishment of the company of Guipuscoa, because before that time the articles which were carried to the Dutch of Curaçao, or which they came in quest of, paid no more tithes to the church, than taxes to the king.

In 1734 the rents of the tithes of the bishop of Caraccas, who then possessed one-third more extent of territory than he now has, amounted to

	89,372 hard dollars.
In 1735 to	92,872
1736 to	100,148
1737 to	96,754
1738 to	81,328

But through the whole intendancy of Caraccas, the tithes have arisen

In 1793 to	309,942 hard dollars.
1794 to	323,307
1795 to	338,571
1796 to	308,682
1797 to	300,573
Which gives, on an average, for each year,	316,215
To which sum there may be added twenty-five per cent. for the expences of management and emoluments of the farmers,	79,053
So that the tithes yield per annum,	395,268 hard dolls.

Indian Tribute.

This is a species of capitation imposed on the civilized Indians, from eighteen to fifty years of age. I have had occasion to speak of it in the chapter con-

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cerning the Indians, to which I refer the reader. This tax, badly collected, and still worse paid, produces annually, from the entire district of the intendant of Caraccas, deducting charges of collection, no more than from 25 to 30,000 hard dollars. The amount is applied to paying the salaries of the preachers of the faith, and is received by the royal treasury, which satisfies the preachers, keeps the surplus, or makes up the deficiency.

Venal Offices.

In America, as in Spain, the king sells all offices in the common council, excepting those of the two *alcades*, who are annually elected. Notaries, attornies, receivers of the audience, assessors, tax-gatherers, &c. are obliged, in order to obtain their commissions, to pay a fine in proportion to the value of their situations, which the royal officers are authorised to settle.

Originally, places were bought only for the life of the nominee. But by an edict of the 14th December, 1606, the incumbent was allowed to sell his appointment provided that on the first resignation the person in whose favour it was made should perform the duties of his office for one half of the emoluments annexed to it; and that on all ulterior resignations, they should be discharged for one third of the value at the time of sale.

The conditions to render the purchase valid were, that the resignee should live twenty days after the sale; that he should possess the talents and qualifica-

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tions necessary for the due performance of all the duties of his office, and that he should within seventy days present his title deed to the audience or political governor, in order to be put into possession. It is requisite moreover to obtain, within the first four years of exercising the purchased office, the confirmation of the king, for which a duty is paid that goes to the account of the venal offices. The produce of this branch of revenue is reduced in the provinces of Caraccas from 6 to 8000 hard dollars a year.

Stamped Paper.

By a royal ordinance of the 28th December, 1638, stamped paper was established in the Spanish possessions in America on the same footing as in the mother country. All agreements, public acts, and judicial proceedings have from that time been required to be on stamped paper. The quality of this paper is infamous; scarcely better than common drafting paper. It is sent every year from Spain ready stamped, with an inscription at the head, designating the two years it is to be in force; for after that it is null and void. It is replaced by other paper, which the mother country takes care to send in advance. When war, or other occurrences prevent the receiving of new stamps in due time, the governments prolong the validity of those, which would otherwise be of no effect.

There are four sorts of stamped paper, or, rather, four stamps of different prices. On the highest the written the deeds, titles, permissions and pardons granted by the viceroys, presidents, audiences, courts

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of accounts, governors, captains-general, and all other ministers of justice. But if the instrument cannot be contained in a single sheet, the rest is written on stamps of the third quality. The highest stamps cost six hard dollars the sheet.

Stamped paper of the second class is used for all sorts of contracts, wills, and transactions before notaries. The first sheet only is required to be of the full price; the others may be of the third. Each sheet of the second class of stamped paper costs one hard dollar and a half.

Stamped paper of the third quality is applied to every thing done in course of law before the viceroys, chancellors, audiences, and all other judges or tribunals. But, for copies, it is necessary that the first sheet be on a stamp of the second class; the rest may be on common paper. The price of a sheet of stamped paper of the third quality is half a dollar.

Paper of the fourth class is destined to official dispatches, and writings presented by paupers or Indians. Each sheet of this costs the sixteenth of a hard dollar.

The annual receipts from stamped paper in the intendancy of Caraccas amount to from 20 to 25,000 hard dollars. It was formerly much more. A proof that the passion for litigation begins to decrease.

Estrays.

These are those personal things which are either strayed or lost, the real proprietor of which is unknown. Whoever finds them is obliged to surrender them to the solicitor of the exchequer, who is bound

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to keep them for a year, after which they belong to the king. But even after the expiration of this period the owner is admitted to make his claim. If the court declares it to be well founded, he is restored to possession on paying costs of keeping, maintenance and suit. Estrays almost always consist of animals or run away slaves, taken up by the armed power of the country. It seems that, among the Spaniards, the master takes good care of his property, or that what he loses, is lost as well to the revenue as the proprietor, for this species of resource amounts to only from 3 to 400 hard dollars a year.

Fifth of the Mines.

In the provinces of Caraccas there is not one mine of gold or silver fit to be worked; there is but one of copper, from which the part that ought to be drawn is never received. Its product is to the exchequer so trifling that there are years in which it does not exceed 40 hard dollars.

Hospital Money,

Is the reserve which is made from the pay of soldiers when they are in the hospital. It in general amounts to from 4 to 5000 hard dollars per annum.

Salt Works.

All salt proceeding from the salt works situated on the eastern coast of Caraccas pays to the king one

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hard dollar for every quintal introduced into the province of Venezuela. The annual amount reaches from 13 to 14,000 hard dollars.

Restitutions.

The Spanish confessors make a restitution of duties defrauded from the king an essential condition of absolution*. For this head, there is in the treasury a register devoted solely to the entry of sums restored. It is true that, if we compare what is restored with the amount of frauds committed, we shall perceive that this mode is not very efficacious; for, of more than 400,000 hard dollars of which the revenue is defrauded every year, not more than 500 are restored. I ought, however, to the praise of Spanish consciences, to acknowledge, that there is not a year in which the Easter confessions do not, among private persons,

* Were absolutions granted on no other condition than that of making a recompence, the Roman Catholic Church would be perhaps, in this respect at least, more conducive to moral behaviour than any other system of established worship; but when the absolution is accorded without any compensation for the offence, and the mere confession deemed of efficacy to obtain forgiveness and purification from sin, there does not, perhaps, exist a system so destructive of every moral duty as that of the Romish church. Let it impress as much as it will on the mind of the penitent the necessity of absolution, but let it annex to it, amends for injuries offered and crimes committed; then, perhaps, even on earth half the will of Heaven will be fulfilled. But when pardon is granted on the word of confession alone, I fear we neither create in the sinner the emotions of a contrite heart, nor rectify the feelings we propose to amend.

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induce exemplary restitutions. The confessor himself is most frequently the channel through which the stolen goods return to their lawful master. The name of the penitent, and the circumstances of the theft, rest in silence. It is left to him that receives, to divine.

Confiscations.

The king receives from all goods confiscated on account of illicit trade, the duties which the commodity would have paid on importation or exportation. The article forfeited is then divided between the informer, if any, the intendant, the council of the Indies, the captors and the king.

Royal Tithes,

Are the entire amount of the tithes of Guiana and Cumana: the whole of which is paid into the treasury of the king. The bishops, whose tithes are received by his majesty, are called bishops of the treasury; such is that of Guiana These tithes amount to from 20 to 25,000 hard dollars a year.

The Corso.

This is denominated the duty which is paid on entering and clearing from the sea ports. Its produce is applied to the support of vessels employed in preventing contraband trade. It ordinarily yields 150,000 hard dollars per annum.

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Guarapos and Game Cocks.

Guarapo is an intoxicating liquor made from the fermentation of coarse sugar and water. It is in general use throughout Terra-Firma. The Indians and negroes prefer it to the best wine. Those who sell it must have a licence from the farmer of the tax, for which they pay.

Cock-fights, so much in vogue among the Spanish, form also a branch of the public revenue. The exclusive privilege of the pit destined for this entertainment, is rented on account of the king. In each town there is but one. All persons are prohibited from fighting cocks in any other place than that which is appointed for the purpose by the farmer. The proceeds from farming the guarapos and cock-fights, are for the maintenance of the hospital of St. Lazarus at Caraccas.

Fines and Amercements.

These are the penalties imposed by the courts of justice. Notwithstanding the multitude of suits, very few penalties are seen to increase the royal treasury.

Vacant Successions.

In our colonies, successions to persons who die intestate, and without any known relations, were much more frequent than among the Spaniards, who, established in America from father to son, have al-

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ways on the spot one to whom the law decrees the property that is left. On the other hand, the inhibition of settling in the Spanish dominions, imposed on strangers, contributes to render vacant inheritances very rare. If, by chance, one should fall in, it is always of very little importance, and can proceed only from some European whom death has surprised in the short abode he intended to make in America.

Ecclesiastical Mesadas.

Under this denomination is understood the amount of the first month which the rectors pay after their nomination. A valuation is made of what the living produces, and the solicitor of the exchequer receives from the clergyman the twelfth part of the estimate. The bishops also pay this duty, the total of which the king reserves for the service of Spain.

Demi-Ecclesiastical Annates.

Are the six month's proceeds which the canons and prebendaries pay out of the revenues of their benefices. This duty is likewise one of those the amount of which is destined to be remitted to Spain, in the same manner as that which follows.

Major and Minor Vacancies.

The treasury receives the rents of vacant bishoprics and canonries, until the new dignitary is in good and lawful possession. These funds serve to pay missionaries, to aid the widows of officers who have

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no claim to pensions, and other objects of piety; the surplus is remitted to Spain.

Bulls.

It would by no means have entered into my plan to mention the bull of the holy crusade, were it not a considerably important branch of the revenue of the state. The varieties of its price, according to the person who buys it, and the object to which it is applied, almost compel me to give its history, which however, I shall abridge as much as possible.

The kings of Spain, at all periods favoured by the popes, obtained from them, in the time of the crusades, extraordinary dispensations for those Spaniards who devoted themselves to the extermination of the infidels. The bulls which contained these dispensations were rated and distributed by a Spanish commissary. Their proceeds were intended to contribute towards the charges of the expedition. The folly of driving people to heaven by force of arms, underwent, at length, the fate of all other follies: reason has caused it to disappear. The bulls, however, have continued to arrive from Rome, and continue to be sold in Spain. The blessings they afford are considered too precious, and the revenue the exchequer draws from them, too useful, to be renounced.

It is true that time, which alters or renders perfect every thing, has caused the popes to give to these bulls, virtues which they did not at first possess, and a division analogous to the purposes for which they

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are designed. According to the original terms of the bull, no one could enjoy its benefits, if he was not actually in arms against the infidels, or did not maintain a substitute in his place. But, for a certain sum, a man might stay at home, and receive all the advantages of the bull. At this day, four kinds of bulls are acknowledged: the general bull for the living, the bull for eating milk, the bull for the dead, and the bull of composition.

General Bull for the Living.

The first, which lasts for two years, ought to be taken by every Spanish christian, or resident within the Spanish domains. The benefits of this bull are general. They extend to the particular objects of the other three kinds, though in a manner less direct; but its virtues are so pre-eminent that I cannot excuse myself from enumerating some.

Every person who has this bull, may be absolved, by any priest whatsoever, of all, even concealed crimes. Obstinate and confirmed heresy is the only exception; an offence, however, that cannot be even suspected, because he who should be tainted with it, would set but little value on absolution.

The possessors of this bull, their domestics, and relations, have, during the time the churches are shut up, a right to hear mass, receive the sacraments, and be buried in holy ground.

With this bull the priest may say mass, and the lay person hear it, one hour before day, and one after twelve. There are, however, some authors who

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insist that this point cannot be granted, but by the commissary-general of the crusade.

Every confessor may release him who has this bull from all kinds of vows, excepting those of chastity, becoming a priest, monk or religious, and that of making a voyage to the holy land.

Blasphemies against the deity are no more able to resist the power of this bull, than a spot of oil upon linen can resist soap.

By means of this bull are gained, in America, the indulgences which visiting the churches* obtained in Rome.

One single day of fasting, and a few prayers, are worth to the possessor of this bull fifteen times fifteen forties, or 9000 of the penances imposed upon him.

On fast days the lay person may eat of every thing, meat excepted, provided he has the bull. It even allows of meat, if the least weakness of constitution, or any other slight indisposition, should occasion any apprehension for his health. Since the 1st of January, 1804, it dispenses with fasting on fridays, and for almost the whole of lent.

Whoever takes, and pays for, two bulls for the living, obtains double the advantages of one.

Bull for eating Milk or Eggs, or de Laitage.

All the faithful, excepting ecclesiastics, from whom

* The Romish faith accorded peculiar indulgences to those persons who performed successive devotions in certain churches; this they term "*stations*" and "*faire ses stations*" is to discharge this act of devotion. T.

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the church has a right to expect greater exactitude in the observance of her laws, have permission by the general bull for the living, to eat milk and eggs during lent. It was necessary then, in order to exempt them from the prohibition of these articles during that period, to establish a special bull. This is the exact and only purpose of the bull *de laitage*. All ecclesiastics, under sixty years of age, ought to purchase it, independent of that of the living, if they wish not to provoke the wrath of heaven, by transgressing the laws of the church respecting eggs and milk.

Bulls for the Dead.

The bull for the dead is a species of ticket for admission into paradise. It enables to clear the devouring flame of purgatory, and conducts directly to the abodes of the blessed. But one of these bulls serves for only one soul. Therefore, the instant a Spaniard expires, his relations send to the treasury to buy a bull for the dead, on which is written the name of the deceased. When the family of the departed is so poor as to be unable to pay for the bull, that is to say, when they are reduced to the most frightful misery, two or three of its members detach themselves, and go begging through the streets to obtain the means of making the purchase. If their zeal is not crowned with success, they shed tears and utter shrieks of lamentation, expressive less of regret for the death of their relation, than of pain for their inability to furnish his soul with this essential passport.

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The virtue of this bull is not confined to dispensing with the obligation of going into purgatory; but extends to extricating the soul, which, like the asbestos, is whitening in its flames. It has the faculty even to designate the spirit it wishes to liberate. It is enough to write upon the bull the name of the person it animated in this lower world, and that very moment the gates of paradise are opened for him. One bull must always be taken for each soul; they may, however, take as many as they please, provided they do but pay. With piety and money it would be easy to empty purgatory, which, indeed, would not long remain unpeopled, because death, whose harvests never cease, would at every instant renew its inhabitants.

*Bulls of Composition.**

The bull of composition is, without doubt, that whose effects are the most sensible, the nearest, and most remarkable. It has the inconceivable virtue of transmitting to the withholder of another's goods, the absolute property in all he has been able to steal without the cognisance of the law. For its validity they require only one condition, which is, that the expectation of the bull did not induce the theft.—Modesty has done well to add, that of not knowing the person to whom the stolen goods belong: but from the cases specified for its application, it appears that this last condition is illusive; for, in a volume,

* "Composition," in Spanish, signifies an agreement, or accommodation of a dispute.

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on the virtue of bulls, printed at Toledo, in 1758, by order of the commissary-general of the holy crusade, we find that the bull of composition befriends those who hold property they ought to return to the church, or employ in works of piety, or which they have not legally acquired by the prayers of which it was the price. It aids those debtors who cannot discover their creditors, or when the conditions of the loan are oppressive; it assists the heir who retains the whole of an inheritance loaded with legacies, were it in favour of a hospital. If a demand has not been made within a year, the bull of composition decrees to its possessor a moiety of the debt; but he is required to pay the residue. It bestows the entire right on those who do not know the owner of that which they have obtained unjustly. Thus a watch, a diamond, a purse full of gold, stolen in the midst of a crowd, becomes the property of the pick-pocket who has filched it; in fine, it quiets the remorse of the conscience of the merchant who has enriched himself by false yards, false measures, and false weights. The bull of composition assures to him the absolute property in whatever he obtains by modes that ought to have conducted him to the gallows.

The party himself values the article which he is desirous of acquiring by means of the bull of composition, and has to purchase as many bulls as are necessary to make their price, which is fixed, equivalent to six per cent. of the capital he wishes to retain. Only fifty bulls a year can, however, be taken by one person. If the amount of what they cost does not complete the six per cent. of that which is

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withheld, recourse must be had to the most illustrious commissary-general of the holy crusade. He may extend the permission as much as he pleases, and even reduce the duty.

No bull has any virtue till after paid for, and the name and surname of the person on whose account it is issued, is written at full length in the blank which is left in the printed form.

The bulls of the holy crusade are in Spanish, upon a sheet of very common paper in demi-gothic letters and wretchedly printed.

Every two years a new bull of the crusade is published with great pomp and solemnity at Caraccas.—The ceremony is performed on St. John's day; in the other churches on that of St. Michael.

The bulls are at first placed in the church of the nuns of the conception. All the clergy, constituted authorities, and people come in triumph to seek them, in order to remove and place them in the cathedral upon a table magnificently decorated. High mass is then performed, after which there follows a sermon entirely devoted to set forth the infinite blessings of the bull. At this festival, the commissary-general of the holy crusade, who is usually a canon, occupies the first place. It has been so long transmitted to him, that under the perplexity of deciding whether he ought to relinquish it to the bishop, it has been found more convenient to advise the prelate not to assist at the celebration. Mass being finished, all the faithful approach the table on which the bulls are laid, that each may obtain one proportioned to his abilities, and to his rank; for the price of the bulls varies ac-

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cording to the opulence and situation of those by whom they are taken. They are nevertheless, notwithstanding the difference of price, of equal virtue, provided there has been no fraud. He who takes a bull of a price inferior to that which his fortune or rank require that he should procure, enjoys none of the advantages attached to it.

You here have the latest duty imposed on the bull of the crusade; "the price is a little raised," says the commissary-general of the crusade in his mandate, dated at Madrid on the 14th of September, 1801, "but it is on account of the new expences of "government, and of the necessity of extinguish-"ing the royal certificates which the scarcity of "money in a time of war has compelled the king "to issue."

General Bull for the Living.—First class.

Viceroys are to pay fifteen hard dollars for this bull, their wives the same.

Second class.

Five hard dollars are paid by arch-bishops, bishops, inquisitors, abbots, priors, canons of cathedral or collegiate churches, dukes, marquisses, counts, viscounts, lords, noblemen, esquires, captains-general, lieutenants-general, field-marshals, brigadiers, colonels, though they have only the rank, presidents, councellors, magistrates, officers of the revenue and ex-

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chequer, though only honorary, superior officers of justice, secretaries and reporters of the royal audiences, knights of the several military orders, secretaries of the king, if but titular, royal officers, governors, chief magistrates, and other officers of forts and citadels, gentlemen possessing fortunes of 12,000 hard dollars, inferior magistrates and justices of villages, having a capital of 1,200 hard dollars. The wives of those above specified are subject to the same tax as their husbands.

Third class.

Every capitalist of 6000 hard dollars pays one and a half for a bull of this sort.

Fourth class.

All other persons, whatever may be their rank and profession pay $2\frac{1}{2}$ reals of eight to the hard dollar.

Bull de Laitage.—First class.

Patriarchs, primates, arch-bishops, bishops, and abbots are taxed for the bull *de laitage* at six hard dollars each.

Second class.

Canons, dignitaries of cathedrals, and inquisitors, pay 3 hard dollars.

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Third class.

Prebendaries of cathedrals, and rectors of parishes, one hard dollar and a half.

Fourth class.

All other secular priests give for this bull three reals of eight to the hard dollar.

Bull of Composition.

Every one, without discrimination, pays 2½ hard dollars for each bull of composition.

Bull for the Dead.—First class.

All those persons comprehended within the three first classes of the bull for the living, pay for this bull six reals of eight to the hard dollar.

Second class.

Those of the fourth class of the bull for the living, pay two reals for the bull for the dead.

Exclusive sale of Tobacco.

Of all the taxes received throughout the extent of the intendancy of Caraccas, the most productive and most recent is that of tobacco. Prior to 1777, tobacco, as we have observed in chapter viii, like every other commodity, might have been cultivated and

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sold by any one. It no sooner made a respectable appearance in agriculture and commerce, than it was destined to increase the public revenue. There was given, however, to the provinces dependent on Caraccas this alternative; either to submit to the monopoly of tobacco, such as had for a long time existed in Mexico and Peru, or to pay to the king a contribution, equal to 12 hard dollars the quintal, on all tobacco raised and prepared for sale.

We can do no less than admire this option, which few governments would have felt disposed to offer; nor can we justly withhold out approbation from the other parts of the cedule of the 24th of June, 1777, which went to justify this fiscal innovation on the ground of the expences incurred in preparations for the war which then appeared to be approaching, and the necessity of increasing the charges of government and defence, in proportion to the advancement of the provinces in population and opulence. On the part of the inhabitants not a single murmur was heard to escape. So that we may safely say, never was a tax demanded with more ingenuity, nor consented to with greater resignation. All the difficulties which arose, were occasioned rather by the misapprehension of the inhabitants, than their resistance, and by the severity of the agents of the treasury, than the rigour of the monarch, as it is easy, from the whole of what took place, to evince.

The commissioner charged to carry this ordinance into effect, was Mr. Avalos, chief intendant of Caraccas. It was not till the beginning of 1779, that he engaged in the undertaking. His first informations

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induced him to imagine that the provinces would prefer a personal tax to the establishment of the exclusive sale of tobacco. Having embraced this opinion, he assessed upon the different cities, country towns, and villages, a duty the total of which amounted to 159,084 hard dollars: of this sum Caraccas was rated at 11,470; Victoria, 2851; Guayra, 862; Tulmero, 3550; Maracaïbo, 2930; Valencia, 3114; Coro, 2233; Porto Cavello, 1031; Barquisemeto, 5927; Carora, 3412; Goanara, 2693; St. Philip, 3402, &c.

There was one thing remarkable in this tax, that it did not seem necessarily to follow the progressive cultivation of tobacco. The silence on this point indicated, that it was even to be regarded as a composition, by means of which the use and trade of tobacco, in all the provinces throughout the extent of the intendancy of Caraccas, ought to be exempted from all ulterior duties, from every restraint and formality of law. In this the intendant did not fulfil the intent of the edict, which was to reserve to the royal treasury twelve hard dollars for every quintal of tobacco that should be gathered. But this inadvertence, error, or omission of the intendant, operated altogether in favour of the inhabitants, who, for this annual sum might even have demanded the entire immunity of tobacco.

This advantage was not perceived. The common council of Caraccas, and after them, all those of the different provinces, beheld this imposition under the hideous aspect of a tribute, which assimilated Spaniards to Indians, or of a poll-tax that confounded all

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in the class of plebeians. Of two sides, they chose the worst. They sacrificed every thing to vanity, nothing to interest; all to anger, nothing to reason. They haughtily preferred the exclusive sale of tobacco to a contribution which they viewed as the seal of slavery and dishonour.

The intendant judged of the resolutions of the other common councils by that which the common council of Caraccas took and sent to him on the 26th of April, 1779, and he judged well. Without uselessly wasting his time in waiting for them, he the very next morning adopted decisive measures for establishing the monopoly of tobacco.

The plantations were instantly suspended. All those who had tobacco received an order to carry it to the warehouses of the king, to be delivered in at a very moderate price. The sale and trade of tobacco, prohibited under very severe penalties, were concentrated in the *estancos*,* or tobacco factories. They selected as situations for tobacco plantations, places where it appeared most easy to prevent illicit trade; and no one was allowed to cultivate it, without an express licence from the administration, and under the condition of submitting to the inspection of its clerks. A swarm of guards covered the soil of these provinces, as heretofore the locusts covered the surface of Egypt. The resource which the free cultivation of tobacco offered was annihilated. The unfortunate people who had till then lived on its produce,

* "Estanco" signifies a place appointed for the sale of a monopolised article.

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were reduced to the most frightful misery. The indigent part of the population in the cities, whom the easy manufacturing and unlaborious sale of tobacco supported, were forced to divide themselves, according to their age or sex, between the shameful exercise of vice and the humiliating pursuit of beggary. A result so fatal would naturally, and, in fact, did excite the greatest clamour. It was generally perceived that the opportunity had been suffered to escape. They endeavoured to make it return. They addressed the king, whom they found disposed to reconcile the wants of the state with the convenience of the people. A royal ordinance of the 31st of October, 1792, abolished the exclusive sale of tobacco in the provinces of the intendancy of Caraccas, "provided the inhabitants would pay, by way of "contribution, the same sum as the administration "of tobacco then produced." This condition differed from that of the edict of the 24th of June, 1777, which ordered the impost in compensation of the exclusive sale, to be levied at only the rate of three hard dollars the quarter of a hundred, or twelve on the quintal; it should have followed the progressive culture of tobacco, although the intendant Avalos had considered it as nearly fixed: whereas the condition of the 31st of October, 1792, determined invariably the amount of the new imposition at that which the exclusive sale then afforded.

This order of the king furnished matter for many debates, many pamphlets, but produced very little elucidation. It was strongly urged not to quit the position in which they then were. On the 16th of

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January, 1793, the intendant, Don Estevan de Leon, officially communicated the last edict to the common council of Caraccas, inviting them, at the same time, immediately to commission some persons to ascertain what the exclusive sale of tobacco produced, in order to collect from the inhabitants a like sum to be paid into the royal coffers by the quarter, half year, or year. He stated also, that it appeared to him equitable to take for this valuation the annual amount on an average of the last five years, from 1788 to 1792.

The 19th of the same month, the common council of Caraccas returned for answer what they ought to have replied on the 26th of April, 1799, that, this being an affair common to all the other cities and towns within the jurisdiction of the intendancy of Caraccas, they would invite them to nominate deputies who might concur with the common council of Caraccas in adopting one uniform resolution.

On this invitation, almost all the common councils sent their delegates. Some demanded information to elucidate the subject of their deliberations. The whole, however, formed but one voice for the abolition of the exclusive sale of tobacco, differing only in the mode by which the duty was to be replaced.

The common council of Varinas alone, voted, on the 3d of April, 1793, for continuing the exclusive sale of tobacco. They maintained that, in its principle, this establishment had all the characteristics of oppression, but that it was, at that epoch, so meliorated as to constitute the felicity of the province of Varinas; that its suppression would be the ruin of

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the cultivation and inhabitants of the district, because the advances which the administration made for the culture of tobacco, were its only nerve and support; that to this encouragement general misery could not but succeed; therefore the *cabildo* of Varinas thought itself excused from concurring in an act which it did not approve.

It is then true, that the same measure will never suit every individual. Where then is the law, which can unite the suffrages of a whole people, when that which has for its object the breaking of the chains of monopoly and giving liberty to industry and commerce, meets with opposers. Happily for the repose of the understanding the explication of this extravagant wish of the common council of Varinas is found in a most methodical, particular and instructive memorial, dated at Caraccas the 7th of October, 1794, and signed by La Torre, Sans and Escalon, delegates from the common councils of Valencia and Tocuyo, from which it appears that the members of the *cabildo* of Varinas voted for the continuance of the administration of tobacco, less on account of the advantages which the province would reap from it, than of the personal emoluments which they themselves would derive. Infamous and sordid men, may your names pass down to posterity with every epithet of contempt!

The deputies of the other common councils re-assembled at Caraccas. A struggle was maintained between them and the intendant, in which a great deal of paper was employed, and by far too much time.

They at first demanded the abolition of the exclu-

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sive sale, in order that every one might recover the liberty of cultivating tobacco, and that its trade and consumption might be liberated from the circle of fiscal exaction. The reasons with which they supported these pretensions were decisive. They would not, however, admit as the rate of impost to be replaced, the amount of what the exclusive sale had, on an average from 1788 to 1792, annually produced, but on that which it had yielded from the era of its establishment, and for the payment of this sum they consented to a duty of twelve hard dollars per quintal, to be collected in the same manner as the other taxes.

The intendant objected, that the quota of the sum to be imposed, in substitution of the produce of the exclusive sale of tobacco, could not be more judiciously settled than on the average year from 1788 to 1792, which did not exceed 428,000 hard dollars; whilst to follow literally the royal order of the 31st of October 1792, it ought to be on what the sale afforded that very year, which would be 494,654 hard dollars, instead of 428,000. But he insisted that the new impost ought to increase every year in proportion to the cultivation of tobacco. This was not correct; for the order of the king runs, that they shall pay a sum equivalent to that which the administration of tobacco, now produces: *la misma cantidad que aora produce la menciorada renta.*

As to the twelve hard dollars per quintal which they proposed to lay on tobacco in order to make up the sum required, the intendant found this mode inadequate, from the great facility every one would

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have of defrauding the revenue. He submitted an addition to this duty, of a tax of five per cent. on the exports and imports of every thing entered at the maritime custom houses, to cover the deficit, in case there should be any.

On one side and the other reams of paper were written, and the difficulties remained the same. Fifteen years exclusive sale of tobacco, has made the advantages of the monopoly too well understood to allow of its being shaken off by the means which they might have used as substitutes before it was established. Every reasoning, every hypothesis, every opinion would be inefficacious against the evidence of the accounts of the exchequer. Not being able to convince the government, they determined to render the monopoly odious. The common council of Caraccas asserted that the administration adulterated the tobacco in the preparation. In the beginning of December, 1794, the syndic-general, Don Louis Lopez Mendez, filed an information against the bad quality of the tobacco sold at the factories. Twenty-six witnesses were heard, every one of whom affirmed that the tobacco of the administration was very bad, and prejudicial to health.

The war, they said, obliged them to leave matters in the state in which they then were. But the peace of Amiens, which has terminated it, has not given them any new direction. In the mean time, tobacco is cultivated in Terra Firma by those individuals alone who have a licence from the director of the system or his overseers, and only within the extent designated by the administration. The tobacco is delivered to

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the king by the cultivators, and they are paid, according to its quality, at the prices contained in chapter vii, article *Tobacco*. The administration sells it in the factories; that is to say:

Tobacco in the stalk, without discrimination of quality, as well that which has cost eleven hard dollars the quintal, as that for which it has paid but three, at the rate of (per quintal)	50 hard dollars.
The juice of tobacco *moo* et *urao*	100
of *chimoo*	200
Fine Snuff, which is imported from the Havanna	300
Rapee	200

I doubt whether in fiscal history, there is to be found an impost which has made such rapid progress as the exclusive sale of tobacco in the provinces of Caraccas. In the eight last months of 1779, the year of its establishment, it yielded but 77,139 hard dollars nett; in 1781, 154,235½; in 1782, 300,319; in 1788, 368,922; in 1791, 405,103; in 1793, 526,353; and in 1802, 724,430.

These sums do not proceed merely from that tobacco alone which is consumed in the provinces within the direction of Caraccas, which is co-extensive with that of the intendant, but from the whole of what is gathered in the plantations of the administration. Although the consumption of tobacco among the Spaniards is very great, for there is not one who does not smoke, it annually leaves a surplus, which the administration sells to strangers with whom it deals. Tobacco is paid for in dry and black goods, at the rate of from twenty to twenty-two hard dollars the quintal, of the best quality.

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Before the war, terminated by the treaty of Amiens, the Spanish administration sent to Amsterdam, all the surplus tobacco which remained after satisfying the consumption of the provinces. It was there sold on account of the king, and the proceeds remitted to Spain. Every thing announces that the same mode will be re-adopted, as soon as the sales subsisting at this time (1804) under contract, are fulfilled, unless war should compel their renewal.

The whole amount arising from tobacco consumed in the provinces, or exported, ought to be transmitted to Spain, and paid into the treasury of the mother country. But as the product of the local taxes cannot entirely cover the expences, the administration of tobacco makes good the deficiency, and the surplus is sent to Spain.

That the provinces may not be divested of coin, they do not remit it in specie. They give it in portions of 15, 20, 30 and 50,000 hard dollars to Spaniards settled in the provinces, who furnish their bills of exchange on Cadiz at six or eight months, and give security in Caraccas for their payment. With this money they buy goods, and send them to Cadiz where they are sold. Out of their produce the bills of exchange are paid. The profit or loss of the speculation falls on the drawer.

Result.

It rarely happens that the sum total of the local duties are adequate to the discharge of the interior expences. But it is particularly since 1796 that the

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imposts established in the provinces of Caraccas have left a very heavy deficit. There have even been years in which the whole proceeds of tobacco have not been sufficient to settle the balance between the expenditures and receipts. In 1801, the intendancy of Caraccas was obliged to borrow from the bank of Santa-Fe, the sum of 200,000 hard dollars, which was sent in gold, and by land. Yet the equilibrium is at this moment established by the aid of from 100 to 150,000 hard dollars, which the tobacco-chest affords. The duties, the receipts of which are the most languishing, are those of the custom-house. The custom-house of Guayra alone used to collect annually from 6 to 700,000 hard dollars a year; it now does not receive a third. What is the cause of this? The diminution of territorial productions.

I think this chapter cannot be better concluded than by a statement of the receipts and expenditures of the provinces. It does not comprise the sums arising from tobaeco, because they are administered separately, and have their own peculiar bank and appropriation.

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Statement of the Receipts and Expences in the whole District of the Intendancy of Caraccas.

Years.	Nett receipts of all the taxes.	Expences of every kind.	Balance.	
			In favour.	Against.
	Hard Dollars.	Hard Dollars.	Hd. Dol.	Hard Dol.
1793	1312188¼	1303583⅜		191865⅛
1794	1561931	1639900		77969
1795	1443056	1549874		106817
1796	1389804	1049247	340565	
1797	1140788	1886363		745475

Note. In this account are not included the receipts from bulls, which annually produce 26,000 hard dollars, nor those from the exclusive sale of tobacco, which amount, deducting all charges, to 700,000 hard dollars a year.

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CHAPTER X.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWNS.

Government of Venezuela—Caraccas—Its prerogatives—Climate—Meteorology—Situation—Waters—Streets—Public Squares—Houses—Public Edifices—Bishop's Palace—Cathedral—Churches—Convents—Religious Customs—Religious Dresses of the Women—Penitential Dresses—Festivals—Our Lady of Copar Cobana—Our Lady of Soledad—Theatre—Tennis Court—Inhabitants—White Europeans—Women—Domestic Slaves—Emancipated Citizens—University—Police—Beggars—Communications with the Interior—With Spain—Merchants—Guayra—Porto Cavello—Valencia—Maracay—Tulmero—Victoria—Coro—Corora—Barquisemeto—Tocuyo—Goarara—Araura—Calabozo—Saint John the Baptist of Pao—Saint Louis de Cura—Saint Sebastian de los Reyes—Saint Philip—Nirgoa—San Carlos—The Government of Cumana—Cumana—Cumanacoa—Cariaco—Barcelona—Conception del Pao—Island of Margaretta—The Government of Maracaibo—Maracaibo—Merida—Truxillo—The Government of Varinas—Varinas—Saint Jaime—San Fernando of Apura.

IT seems to me, that in order to satisfy, as much as I can, the curiosity of the reader on provinces hitherto as little unknown to the political world, as those parts of China which are the most interdicted to strangers, it is proper that I should add to the general knowledge contained in the preceding chapters some particular ideas, which might serve to unfold what I have been able but to sketch of the manners, political institutions, situation and importance of the towns.

The uniformity of character and customs does not allow of observing very sensible differences between the habits of one town and those of another. To enable the reader to judge what the secondary towns must be, it would suffice, perhaps, to describe the capital, from whence the ton, fashion, and every alteration proceeds. Yet there are shades formed by the difference of situation and production which it is my duty to remark.

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This description shall be made by governments, that the reader may be able to understand their frame and importance. The honour of priority being on all accounts due to the province of Venezuela, we shall commence with that, and with the capital of those immense countries.

Government of Venezuela.—Caraccas.

This town, situated in 10 degrees 31 minutes of north latitude, and in 69 degrees 3 minutes of longitude west from the meridian of Paris, was founded by Diego Losada, in 1567; forty-seven years after Cumana, thirty-nine after Coro, thirty-three after Barcelona, and fifteen after Barquisemeto.

Its prerogatives.

It is the capital, not only of the province of Venezuela, but also of that immense extent of territory occupied by the governments of Maracaïbo, Varinas, Guiana, Cumana, and the island of Margaretta, since it is the seat as well of the captain-generalship, the civil and military authority of which extends over all the provinces, as of the royal audience, the intendancy, and of the consulate, whose limits are co-extensive with those of the captain-general.

Its climate.

The climate of Caraccas by no means corresponds with its latitude. For, instead of the insupportable

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heats, which it would seem ought to reign in the proximity of the equator, we, on the contrary, there enjoy an almost perennial spring. It owes this advantage to its elevation which is four hundred and sixty toises above the level of the sea.

Not a day, however, elapses without the sun's endeavouring to urge those rights which he exercises on all regions placed under the same latitude; but the topographical situation of Caraccas enables her to dispute them with advantage. These transitions from the warmth of the torrid, to the cool freshness of the temperate zones, produce a variety of indispositions, of which the most common are colds and influenzas, which by the Spaniards are denominated *catarros*.

Its meteorology.

State of Fahrenheit's thermometer at Caraccas.

In the Winter.

Generally at 6 in the morning,	58
at 2 in the afternoon,	73
at 10 at night,	68
the *maximum*,	76
the *minimum*,	52

In the Summer.

Generally at 6 in the morning,	72
at 2 in the afternoon,	79
at 10 at night,	75
the *maximum*,	85
the *minimum*,	69

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Moisture, according to the hygrometer of Duluc.

Generally,	47
the *maximum*,	58
the *minimum*,	37

Changes of the atmosphere.

The mercury which in the most southern parts of Europe rises, from the variations of the atmosphere, as much as eleven lines of the Paris inch, does not, in the eastern part of Terra-Firma, rise more than two lines.

In Caraccas, at all seasons of the year, four small atmospheric tides are observed every twenty-four hours, two in the day, and two in the night.

Blue portion of the sky, according to the cyanometer of Seaussure.

Generally,	18

Oxygen and nitrogen gas.

Of a hundred parts twenty-eight are oxygen and sixty-two nitrogen.

The *maximum* of the first is	29
The *minimum*	$27\frac{1}{2}$

Magnetic variation.

On the 27th of September, 1799, 4 degrees, 38 minutes, 45 seconds.

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Inclination of the Pole.

Generally, $43\frac{52}{100}$

Oscillations of the pendulum.

In fifteen minutes, twelve hundred and seventy vibrations.

Its situation.

The city of Caraccas is built in a valley, which has an east and west direction for about four leagues, and between the mountains of that vast chain which coasts the sea from Coro to Cumana. It is as in a basin of this chain; for it has mountains of an equal height to the north and to the south. It is placed with its back to the former, and at a little distance from the latter.

The ground occupied by the city is two thousand paces square. It is as nature formed it. Art has done nothing to level the soil, or diminish its irregularities. There are therefore but few parts where one is not obliged either to rise or descend. The fall is invariably from the north to the south. It is seventy-five toises from the gate of Pastora on the north, to the river Guayra, which bounds the city on the south.

Its Waters.

It enjoys the streams of four small rivers. The first which is called Guayra, without entering into the

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city, bounds entirely the southern part. Though it be not considerable enough to receive the appellation of a river, it is yet sufficiently so to merit one more respectable than that of a brook.

The second, which bears the name of Anauco, washes the eastern part of the city. The point in which it approaches nearest is *La Candelaria*, where they have erected a handsome bridge which facilitates the communication with the valley of Chacao.

The third is the Caroata. It runs over rocks and in a bed formed by steep banks on each side. Its course is from north to south, on the whole eastern part of the town. It even separates it from the quarter of St. John. The two parts of the city are united by a stone bridge constructed with tolerable solidity, but the regularity of which by no means approaches that of the bridge of Candelaria.

The fourth is named Catucho. The city is indebted to it for the water of an infinity of public and private fountains which flow but at the expence of this river. Yet the inhabitants of Caraccas, insensible of its kindness, suffer it to run in the same bed which time has hollowed out, and in the midst of deformities the rains have occasioned; for the five bridges of communication they have thrown across it, are attributable rather to necessity, demanding even more, than to a spirit of ornament, which would require that the hand of man should repair the ravages of time, whose disagreeable impressions this river carries throughout the whole length of the city it traverses.

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These four rivers, after administering to all the domestic uses of the town, unite themselves in one bed, then flowing through the valley of Chacao, covered with fruit, provisions and articles of commerce, at length mingling their waters with those of the Tuy, discharge themselves, under that name, into the ocean twelve leagues east of cape Codera.

Its Streets.

The streets of Caraccas, like those of all modern cities, are on a straight line, about twenty feet wide, paved, intersecting each other at right angles, and at the distance of about three hundred feet one from the other. This is the only regularity, the only symmetry observable in this large city, which is, in other respects well built.

Its Public Squares.

There are but three squares which deserve that appellation, and even they are not without their deformities. The grand square, named *Plaça Mayor*, which ought to be the most regular, is covered with barracks built on the east and south quarters, which are let out to merchants on account of the city, and for the miserable sum derived from rent the eye is deprived of a view that nothing can recompense.—This square occupies the same space as one of those portions of the town denominated *Quadras*, that is to say, about three hundred feet square. It is well paved, and the market for every kind of provision is

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held in it. Vegetables, fruits, meat, salted provisions, fish, poultry, game, bread, parrots, monkeys, lazy slaves, birds, every thing whatsoever, is there sold. The cathedral, situated on the eastern part of the square, has also no kind of symmetrical proportion. This square has two entrances on each side.

The second square is that of Candelaria, surrounded by a tolerably regular road and iron paling, on masonry of unequal height. The square, though not paved, has an argillaceous soil, mixed with sand, which is as good as the best pavement; and on the whole, presents an agreeable object. It is not at all indebted to the buildings with which it is environed. The church of Candelaria alone affords it any ornament. Although there is not a perfect geometrical harmony between them, the church has a façade which relieves the view, and adds much to the appearance of the square.

The third is that of St. Paul; its only regularity is its square shape, and its only ornament, a fountain in the middle. The church of St. Paul is on its south-east corner, with which it has no other correspondence than that of forming a part of its square. This square is neither paved nor level.

The other squares are: 1st. That of the Trinity, which has not even the form of one; with the surface so uneven, that the eye recognises in it only a spot, destined to transmit to posterity the negligence, rather than the taste of the citizens. 2d. That of St. Hyacinth, in which is the convent of the Dominicans. It is bordered on the west by the pavement of one street and crossed by another, which do not allow us

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even to suppose it was ever intended to make it a square.

3d. That of St. Lazarus, which is a kind of inclosure in front of the church of the same name, situated to the south-east of the city. It has the merit of being tolerably neat, but so far removed from the centre of the city, that it does not seem to make a part of it.

4th. The square of Pastora, with the ruins surrounding it, and the church itself, for the ornament of which it ought to have been completed, offers nothing but the melancholy aspect of monuments abandoned to the voracity of time.

5th. That of St. John is spacious, but irregular, unpaved, and only bordered on the west by a row of meanly constructed houses. It is here that the horse militia are exercised.

Its Houses.

The houses of individuals are good and well built. In the interior there are many which are storied and of a very handsome appearance. Some are of brick; but the major part, of masonry in frame work, nearly after the manner of the Romans, and as, even at this day, is practised for building in marshes, the sea, &c. according to the mode published by Mr. Tardif, in 1757.

They construct a sort of caisson without a bottom of boards five feet long and three broad, which is made the mould of the front of the wall they intend to erect. The place on which they build, serves for

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the bottom of this caisson, supported by a scaffold, which is removed at every form that is added to the wall. In this form they place and beat up at every layer, a mortar, named in the country, *tapia*. There are two kinds of it; the first to which they give the pompous appellation of *tapia* royal, is composed of river-sand and lime. With this they often intermix flint or small pebbles. The second is of sand and earth, with a very small portion of lime. From the combination of ingredients it is easily perceived which will endure the longest. By means of the pestle, however, both of them acquire a consistency which, for a length of time, braves the inclemency of seasons, and injury of years. These houses, when once rough-cast and whitewashed, look quite as well as if built of hewn stone. The roofs are sharp, or with two eaves. The carpenter's work is well put together, very elegant, and of excellent wood, which the country furnishes in abundance. The covering is of curved tiles.

The houses of the principal persons in the city are, in general, neatly and even richly furnished. We behold in them beautiful glasses; at the windows and over the inside doors, elegant curtains of crimson damask; chairs and sophas made of wood, the seats of which, covered with leather or damask, are stuffed with hair, and adorned with gothic work, but overloaded with gilding; bedsteads, with deep headboards, showing nothing but gold, covered by superb damask counterpanes, and a number of down pillows in fine muslin cases, trimmed with lace. There is seldom, it is true, more than one bed of this magni-

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ficence in each house, which is in general the nuptial couch, and afterwards serves only as a bed of state.

The eye wanders also over tables with gilded feet; chests of drawers, on which the gilder has exhausted all the resources of his art; brilliant lustres, suspended in the principal apartments; cornices which seem to have been dipped in gold; and rich carpets, covering at least all that part of the room where the seats of honour are placed; for the parlour, furniture is disposed in such a manner that the sopha, which constitutes the most essential article of household attire, is situated at one end with the chairs arranged on the right and left, and opposite the principal bed of the house placed at the other extremity of the room, in a chamber, the door of which is open, unless it be fixed in an alcove equally open, and by the side of the seats of honour.

These sorts of apartments, always exceedingly neat, and very handsomely ornamented, are, as it were, interdicted to the inhabitants of the house. They are opened, with scarce any exception, only in honour of those who come to fulfil the tender duties of friendship, or the irksome ceremonies of etiquette.

Its Public Buildings.

The city of Caraccas possesses no other public edifices than those which are dedicated to religion. The captain-general, royal audience, intendant, and all the tribunals, occupy rented houses. The very hospital of the troops is in a private house. The

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contadoria, or treasury, is the only building which belongs to the king, and its construction is very far from announcing the majesty of its master.

This is not the case with the barracks. They are new, handsome, elegantly built, and situated on a spot from whence the view strikes on the town.—They are storied, and with a double yard. Two thousand men may be commodiously lodged within them. They are occupied by the troops of the line alone. The militia have their barracks, that is, a house which serves for that purpose, in the opposite part of the city.

It is to be lamented that the ground has not been levelled, for two or three hundred paces round the new barracks, and that they have not been surrounded by a wall of two feet coped with iron railing. This operation, by no means costly, would procure to the city a delightful walk, and to the troops a most commodious place for their exercise and manœuvres. By adding 12 or 15,000 hard dollars, to the 24,000 expended on this building, which serves to adorn nothing, and which its environs disfigure, they would have given it an aspect that would have doubled both its beauty and utility.

The Archbishopric.

Caraccas is the seat of the archbishopric of Venezuela, the diocese of which is of a very considerable extent. It is bounded on the north by the sea, from the river Unara, quite to the district of Coro; on the

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east by the province of Cumana; on the south by the Oronoko; and on the west by the bishopric of Merida. I have already said that it was erected into an archbishopric in 1803.

The annual revenue of the archbishop depends on the abundance of the harvests, and the price of the articles on which the tithes are collected. We have seen that they are divided between the archbishop, the chapter, the king, and ministers of religion. The fourth going to the prelate, amounted, one year with another, antecedent to the war terminated by the treaty of Amiens, to 60,000 hard dollars. The declension of cultivation will for a long time prevent the episcopal revenues from amounting to an equal sum. The archbishop does not enjoy the whole of even the fourth of the tithes. The king reserves to himself the disposition of the third of this fourth, upon which he assigns pensions.

The seat of this archbishopric was established at Coro, in 1532, because it is from thence, as has been said, that the province of Venezuela began to be peopled with Europeans. Its translation to Caraccas, in 1636, without being a very important part of history, was effected in a manner so singular, as ought not to be passed over in silence.

To the natural aridity of the environs of Coro, which allows the earth to produce but few fruits, and scarcely any provisions, there chanced to be added a drought, such as had never before been experienced. The scarcity became extreme. Provisions entirely failed, and famine commenced its ravages.

The prelate, Boxorques, as much, no doubt, to fly

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from a land to which providence denied her favours, as to withdraw from fasts the church did not command, left Coro, and fixed his residence, in 1613, at Caraccas. Scarcely had he arrived, when he inclined the governor to support, on his part, the request which he made to the king, of transferring the cathedral from Coro to Caraccas, as his predecessor Alcega had solicited. He found, in the transmigration of Abraham from the sterile region of Chaldea to the fertile land of Canaan, motives sufficient to justify this change of residence, which circumstances rendered far more necessary and pressing than that of the patriarch.

The bishop felt so sure of success, that he wrote, on the 4th of June, 1613, to the chapter at Coro, directing them to come immediately to Caraccas, with the slaves, ornaments, &c. belonging to the cathedral The dean, seduced by the bishop, was in favour of the measure, but the chanter and treasurer were opposed to it. As soon as the common council of Coro were informed of it, they presented themselves to the chapter, to protest against every such proceeding. They notified to it the edict of the 19th of May, 1589, by which the king prohibited the governor from consenting to this translation. They communicated the whole to the king, who refused the petition of the prelate.

In 1635, the bishop Agurto de la Mata, instructed by experience, took his measures better for consummating the work of translating the cathedral from Coro to Caraccas. Being already on the spot of his new residence, he did nothing more than write to the

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chapter to repair to Caraccas. The dean, without loss of time, came, under pretext of a licence for a vacation from ecclesiastical affairs. The chanter and treasurer staid a little longer, in order to find some opportunity of removing whatever appertained to the church, without the knowledge of the inhabitants of Coro. They succeeded, and arrived in the beginning of 1636.

They instantly wrote an account of it to the king, who would not have approved of this translation had it been requested of him; but, being once effected, there remained no other act of sovereignty for him to exercise than that of approving the measure, and he did approve of it the 16th of November, 1636.

The holy father, who could wish for nothing in the West-Indies besides what the king of Spain desired, confirmed, without hesitating, the translation of the episcopal seat of Venezuela; and, from that period, the mother church of the province has been fixed at Caraccas, and served by ministers, the advanced age of some, the plumpness of others, and the virtues of all of whom prove that they have, in fact, met with a place equally adapted to the health of the soul, as the preservation of the body.

The inhabitants of Coro appealed to the audience of St. Domingo, where they were cast. They made another appeal, with the same inefficacy, to the council of the Indies. Their endeavours even contributed to cause the issuing of a royal ordinance, on the 20th of June, 1693, confirming definitively the translation, which that of the 16th of November, 1636, had only provisionally sanctioned.

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The Cathedral.

The cathedral church has no right to be described, but from the rank which it occupies in the hierarchy of places of public worship. One is astonished to see that a town so populous as Caraccas, where the christian religion is so honoured, does not possess a cathedral more correspondent to the importance of the bishopric, and the grandeur of the city. It is not that the interior is not decorated with beautiful tapestry and superb gilding, that the habits of the priests and holy vessels do not announce the supremacy of the church to which they belong; but its construction, style of architecture, dimensions and distribution, have nothing august, commanding, or regular.

It is about two hundred and fifty feet in length, by seventy-five in breadth: low, supported on the inside by twenty-four pillars in four rows running lengthwise. The two centre rows from the nave, twenty-five feet wide, and the two others divide the aisles, at the distance of twelve feet and a half each; so that the nave alone has the width of the two aisles, which are on the right and left of each side. The high altar, instead of being in conformity to the Romish church, is placed against the wall. The choir occupies the moiety of the nave, and the distribution of this church is such, that it does not allow more than four hundred persons to see the priests who celebrate mass, at which soever altar they officiate. The exterior owes nothing either to the taste or the ability of the artificer. The steeple alone, without having received any embellishment from art, has at least the merit of

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a boldness, that the cathedral is very far from possessing. The only clock in Caraccas is in this steeple; it strikes the quarters of the hour, and divides the time with tolerable exactitude.

The humble architecture of the principal place of worship in Caraccas, is owing to a cause which the honour of the inhabitants demands that I should relate. The episcopal seat having been transferred from Coro to Caraccas, in 1636, there was, necessarily, before that time, no cathedral in this town; and when they began to execute the plan of a superb church, a severe earthquake, coming on upon the 11th of June, 1641, at three-quarters past eight in the morning, and which caused infinite desolation in the city, was regarded as the advice of providence to render the edifice better calculated to resist these sorts of catastrophes, than to captivate the admiration of virtuosi. They, from that moment, no more thought of, or rather, totally renounced, magnificence, in order to bestow on it solidity alone. But nature, having made no other aberration of this kind at Caraccas, they have resumed the project of building an elegant cathedral.

Churches and Convents.

In Caraccas there are five parish churches; the Cathedral, St. Rosolia, St. Paul, la *Candelaria*, or Candlemas, and Alta Gracia; three monasteries of friars; the Franciscans or Cordeliers, the Dominicans, and those of la *Mercy*; one house of preachers;

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one hospital of Capuchins; two nunneries, one of the Conception, the other of the Carmelites; one house of *Educandas*, or for the education of young women; three churches; St. Maurice, the Trinity, and *le Divina Pastora*, which the Spaniards call *Ermitas*, literally hermitages, because they are not parish churches, and belong neither to convents, nor to hospitals. These sorts of places of worship, always owe their existence and support to the pious liberality of the faithful in the quarters where they are placed. Each of them has a fraternity which regulates the expenditures and ceremonies, and collects the alms.—To each are attached an almoner, and many assistant priests. There are two hospitals, one appropriated to men, the other to women; lastly, there is a hospital for lepers, and a church in the gift of the academy.

The churches of Caraccas, are in general well built. That which surpasses all the others is the parochial church of Alta Gracia; whose structure would do honour to the first cities in France. The right that virtue and decency has to public esteem, and admiration, renders it a duty in me to make known, that the free men of colour in the vicinage of this church, have, with the aid of a few contributions from the whites, constructed and adorned it at their own expence. That of Candelaria owes its erection and solidity to the Islanders of the Canaries, resident in that quarter.

After these two churches, architecture requires that I mention those of three convents of friars, which are built on the same plan, only that the interiors of the church of the Franciscans, and those of *la Mercy*,

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are executed with a little more care. They have this peculiarity, each before the principal gate of the church, and on a line with the street, has a yard surrounded by a wall, in front of the church-door, which is raised so high as to conceal it from view. The reason given to me for this, was, the obligation decency laid them under not to expose to the irreverence of passengers, either the sanctuary, or the celebration of its mysteries. That of St. Philip of Neri, or of the preachers, which has the dignity of an ordinary chapel, is about to be replaced by a large church, which is to be actually built from the produce of the liberality of a lady of Caraccas.

All the churches are very neat, but loaded with gilding from the bottom of the altar to the ceiling. Those authors, who, like Robertson, have so much cried up their riches, assuredly have not formed this idea from those of Caraccas, unless they have taken every thing that is gilded for massy gold; for without that, it is impossible to account for their error. The churches have every thing that is proper for decency of worship; but there is neither profusion nor pomp. The linen, the lace, the tapestry, the habits of the holy virgins and fathers, when they walk in procession, or when they are exhibited on the octaves of their festivals, and the ornaments of their ministers, must necessarily have cost a great deal of money; but, as soon as these articles are made up, they cease to represent any effective value, and can no longer be regarded as riches. Gold, silver, and diamonds alone possess an intrinsic value; and these are very far from being abundant. Of this we may judge

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from the frequent removals of some large silver chandeliers, owned by the cathedral, and which are lent to the other churches when they celebrate any great festival.

Religious Customs.

The people of Caraccas, like the whole Spanish nation, are proud of being christians, and in this they are right; but they deceive themselves, in imagining they cannot be so, without mixing the same pride in the practice of religion. The humility of the creature is, without doubt, far more agreeable to the Deity, than his ostentation. Charity, or the love of God and our neighbour, is that which constitutes the christian and citizen. But I forget that I am only an historian, and not a theologist; an observer, and not a reformer. Let him who will, treat on these inexhaustible matters; for my part, I return to the path which conducts to my end.

The Spaniards are exceedingly assiduous in the offices of religion, that is to say, in masses, days of duty, sermons, and processions; for, one would scarcely believe that they do not rank vespers among the number of religious exercises, as is done in France, and even in Spain.

The men go to church in nearly the same dress as we do. They must, however, be in a coat, great coat, or covered with a cloak. Neither rank nor colour dispenses with one of these three dresses.

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Religious Habits of the Women.

The habits of the women, rich or poor, especially of the whites, are most rigorously required to be black. The dress consists, in a petticoat and veil of black. Slaves alone are bound to have a white veil.

This religious custom had no doubt for its object, by imposing on the sex the obligation of a veil, to banish from the temple of the divinity improper luxury, seductive coquetry, impure desires, wanton looks; and by establishing an uniformity of dress, and of colour, to remind the faithful of the equality which subsists in the presence of God, and to hinder riches, birth, and rank from profaning the sanctity of the place by distinctions always afflicting to those, who join indigence to an obscure descent. But this wise institution, like all those which come from the hand of man, in passing through the course of a few ages, has, like manners, become corrupted, and has preserved nothing of its original purity but the colour, which remains black.

The dress which, at its first institution, was required to be the same for all women, and of a stuff exceedingly cheap, is become the most studied and expensive. The veils of gauze which the women wear, show, to the eye desirous of such representations, the freshness of every feature. This habiliment, purely religious, since its chief use is for divine offices, made of silk or velvet enriched with the most elegant blonds, often costs from four to eight hundred hard dollars. Those who blush at publishing their poverty by garments less rich, give themselves up to

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all sorts of privations to rival others. The most impatient prefer to this slow and sometimes impracticable mode of economy, means more expeditious, but less honest. How often does this raiment of modesty and bashfulness become the price of criminal condescension. This habit, in some degree the livery of providence, is not, however, so rigorous as to be without its exceptions.

Penitential Dresses.

Many ladies, to divert the vengeance of Heaven, with which they think themselves menaced, whether in dangerous sicknesses or other occasions, make vows to assist at religious ceremonies, during a time proportioned to the imminence of the danger, or importance of the request, in a dress emblematic of the power they have called to their aid; so that, if they have invoked our lady of *la Merci*, they wear a habit, with some little difference, of that order, at least of the same colour and stuff. Those who owe the favour solicited to our lady of the Seven Sorrows, wear a black dress with a heart of red stuff on the left side. The gratitude that is due to our lady of mount Carmel, is testified by a violet habit with a large medal on the left side. When St. Francis is addressed, the habit of his order is borne, the colour of which, in Spanish America, is blue, &c. &c.

Those who have no other means of procuring the garments of the church peculiar to their sex, are obliged to go to those masses which are said before day, and are called *missas de madrugada*. They

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are celebrated at those hours only, for the convenience and spiritual advantage of those, who have not clothes sufficiently decent to enter a church in the day.

Festivals.

The Spaniards know not of any other festivals than those which are found in the Romish calendar. They are so multiplied at Caraccas, that there are very few days in the year on which they do not celebrate some saint, or some virgin, in one of the churches that are situated there. What multiplies them to infinity, is, that every festival is preceded by a *newvaine*, or a succession of nine days, consecrated to prayer alone; and followed by an *octave*, or succession of eight days, during which the faithful of the quarter, and even of the rest of the city, to their prayers join public amusements, such as fire-works, concerts, balls, &c. but the pleasures of these festivals are never extended to the balls. Feasts which, even according to their etymology, ought to be the soul of festivals, and in fact are so among other people, are, in a manner, unknown to the Spaniards. This nation is sedate, even in the delirium of pleasure.

The most brilliant acts of these festivals are the processions of the saint who is celebrated. They always take place in the afternoon. The saint, as large as life, is richly dressed. He is carried on a table, very handsomely decorated, and followed or preceded by some other saint of the same church, less sumptuously adorned. A number of flags and crosses

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open the march. The men walk in two lines. Each of the principal persons has in his hand a wax taper; then come the music, the clergy, the civil authorities, and lastly, the women, surrounded with a barrier of bayonets. The train is always very numerous.—The frames of all the windows in the streets through which the procession moves, are ornamented with hangings floating in the air, which give to the whole quarter an air of festivity that exhilarates. The windows themselves are adorned with women, who crowd to them from all parts of the city, to enjoy this agreeable exhibition.

The principal, and almost exclusive devotion of the Spaniards, is to the holy virgin. They have her in all the churches, under different appellations, each of which has been established in a manner more or less miraculous; of these there are two, sufficiently remarkable for the singularity of their inauguration, to require that I should partake with tradition in the care of preserving the memory of them.

Our Lady of Copa Cobana.

The first is our lady of Copa Cobana. An Indian, tradition says, walking in the streets of Caraccas, pulled off his hat; he saw a half-real fall out of it, which is nearly of the size of our half-livres. Rejoiced at this good luck, he runs as fast as he is able, to the first tavern, and lays it out in brandy. He sallies forth, and going to seat himself at the corner of a street, where he has occasion to pull off his hat again, out drops another half-real. More astonished than at

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first, he nevertheless spends it in brandy. A moment after, he, for the third time, takes off his hat, and another, or the same demi-real falls on the ground. He picks it up, examines it, and observes on it the figure of a virgin. He deposits this precious piece in a scapulary, which he hangs on his neck and under his shirt. A short time after, he assassinates a man. He is arrested, imprisoned, and condemned to be hanged. The executioner places the cord round his neck; it breaks. He puts on one more strong; it breaks in the same manner. The Indian then declares that this miracle was worked by virtue of our lady of Copa Cobana. He desires them to take off his scapulary, and they find in it the half-real, which was now grown as big as a dollar, and the figure of the virgin mournful and in a sweat.

The Indian requested that they would remove her to the church of St. Paul, and that they would have recourse to her for every thing they wished to obtain from heaven. This was granted, and the Indian was hanged. The common council, or municipality of Caraccas, ordained, that they should address to this virgin those prayers for rain, which drought might render necessary. In fact, whenever the rains do not come at the desired time, they go in procession to seek our lady of Copa Cobana, at St. Paul's, and carry her to the cathedral, where she remains two days, in high festival. They carry her back with the same solemnity to St. Paul's. The archbishop, the chapter, all the vicars, priests, monks of all the convents, the captain-general, royal audience, and common council, assist at these processions. Without attacking the foundation of this miracle, I ought to

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say, that the tradition is not in all points exact; for this virgin, which ought to be found on a dollar, is represented by a little wooden figure, seven or eight inches long, covered with gold and jewels, and carried in a shrine. How can that which was silver, be of wood? and a medal become a statue? There is some reason for all this, which a number of old women must know, though I have been unable to explain.

Our Lady of Soledad.

The second virgin found in Caraccas by a miracle, is our Lady of Soledad. A rich female of Caraccas, possessing estates on the coast, between Porto-Cavello and Guayra, requested from Spain, a model of our Lady of Soledad, who is worshipped at Madrid in a chapel dedicated to her. One day walking on the sea shore, she saw on the beach a chest on which she beheld her address. Astonished at this adventure, she caused the chest to be carried to her residence. They opened it, and a superb statue of our Lady of Soledad struck the eyes of all the assistants. They prostrated themselves, cried out a miracle, and no longer addressed either vows or prayers, to any but this virgin. A few days after, the vessel, in which the virgin requested from Spain ought to have come, arrived at the port of Guayra. The captain waited on the lady, put into her hand the letter of advice, then melting into tears, declared that having encountered on his passage a dreadful storm, they were obliged, in order to ease the vessel, to cast into the

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sea whatever came first to hand; and that, unfortunately, the chest in which the virgin of Soledad was, had made a part of the things thrown overboard. They compared dates, and verified that the Virgin of Soledad was found on the beach on the very day of the storm. They cried anew; a miracle! The news spread in all parts; and the credit of our Lady of Soledad was everlastingly established. The lady of Caraccas at her death, bequeathed her to the convent of Franciscans, where she is prayed to and invoked in all those difficulties, from whence it is thought they cannot be extricated but by her intercession.

Theatre.

The only public amusement at Caraccas is the theatre, which they enjoy only on festivals. The price of admission, being only a real, about 60 *cents*. sufficiently indicates the excellence of the actors, as well as the beauty and convenience of the place. All the pieces, in themselves most wretched, are, moreover, miserably performed. The declamation of this theatre, by no means deserving the ear of Thespis, is a species of monotonous stammering, very like the tone in which an infant of ten years old recites a badly studied lesson. No grace, no action, no inflection of voice, not a single natural gesture; in a word, nothing of that which constitutes the actor of a common theatre. The performers of Caraccas may be compared to those merry-andrews who run from fair to fair, living rather on the produce of compassion, than by the pleasure they afford.

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After this picture, every one would conclude that such an exhibition ought to be deserted, or at least frequented by that part of the people only which has neither taste nor education. On the contrary, however, rich and poor, old and young, nobles and plebeians, the governing and governed, all most assiduously attend this theatre. The only problem which I have been unable to solve, in all my observations at Caraccas, is the indifference of the inhabitants of this city, who in other respects are possessed of taste and very considerable information, on so essential a point of public amusement.

The blame of equal negligence falls immediately on the local authorities, to whose superintendance and attention is entrusted the care of public ornaments, and the recreation of the people. The city of Caraccas is sufficiently important, as well from its population as its commerce, to have a theatre that might adorn the city, and the actors of which should not be mere automata.

The theatre demands so much the more of the attention of the magistrate as it makes a very important article of public instruction. It only narrows the ideas, enslaves the mind, debases the soul, continues or creates pusillanimity, when the performance is in a garret by men without talents, whose tongues seem rather to obey the laws of mechanism than the impulse of sentiment.

The stage is dangerous, when the pieces represented are obscene and immoral; when the intrigue is gross; virtue turned into derision; parental authority ridiculed; the laws scoffed at, and baseness

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rendered triumphant. It then becomes the school of vice and corruption.

The stage, to be really useful, ought to admit of no other pieces than those in which cunning, dishonesty, seduction, have but an ephemeral success; in which stupid pride, foolish vanity, hateful falsehood, always terminate by yielding the honours of approbation to modesty and candour; where true courage, loyalty, and benevolence are placed in the rank of the first of virtues; where filial respect and parental tenderness captivate public admiration; where labour and industry are reverenced, where calumny inspires horror, and slander contempt, &c. But, however discreetly theatrical pieces may be combined, the fruit which ought to be reaped from them, depends as much on the manner in which they are represented, as on the nature of the composition. The best piece coldly delivered, and without any observation of the rules prescribed by art, makes no more impression on the spectators than vespers, or the psalm singing of lukewarm Christians.

It is necessary that the actor should be affected with his part to play it with success. His soul ought to be filled with the sentiments of the piece, in order to communicate them to the beholder; for it is impossible to make others feel, what we do not feel ourselves. Without ease and correctness of gesture, without just inflections of voice, without clearness of pronunciation, it is more agreeable and more useful to read a piece than see it represented.

A theatre established on the principles I have described, is a real school for manners, where the heart

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is formed by acquiring a love of virtue and abhorrence of vice; a court for the national language, where every one learns to fix his ideas on the true acceptation of words; a model for oratory, where all those who are destined for the bar or the church may acquire the talent of moving the passions, and opening the way to the heart by the irresistible power of eloquence.

With these relations, a good theatre is one of the most useful institutions a city can adopt. It is for youth, an object of amusement and instruction; for old age, of recreation, and, according as the magistracy gave it a prudent direction, it might contribute to reconcile to law the respect, and to public authority, the obedience, which are their due.

Inhabitants of Caraccas! should these cursory reflections ever reach you, receive them as a tribute of gratitude for the air you permitted me to breathe among you.

Tennis Court.

Since I am describing the public amusements of Caraccas, I ought to speak of the three tennis courts, in which they play with the hand and the racket. One is situated at the southern extremity of the city, near the river Guayra; the second, at the eastern part, not far from the Catucho; the third, also to the east, a quarter of a league from the town.

The Biscayans have introduced this game, and have abandoned it to the people of the country, who observe its rules most exactly; and who, without

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displaying an address so admirable as that of the Biscayans themselves, play it nevertheless well enough to divert the amateurs who assist at their parties. Very few whites amuse themselves with tennis, and it is in general played with a racket.

A few billiard tables, in bad condition, and which scarce any person frequents, constitute, in some degree, the complement of amusements of Caraccas.

We should deceive ourselves however, if we should infer from this penury of amusements, that the Spaniards are not gamesters; the passion for gambling reigns among them more than with us. They are even rash in their play. Neither loss nor gain obtains from them any emotion of impatience or of pleasure. The sensations of good or bad fortune, are concentrated in their souls. To speak properly, it is only at play that they appear to set no value on money. Those who game deep have had, until 1800, the police for their enemy. They were obliged to elude its vigilance by frequently changing the place of their meeting, and admitting into the secret those alone who were of the party. But for these three or four years it has been only the poor who have been watched, imprisoned, and condemned in penalties by the police on account of gaming. Those above the common rank have a tacit permission to reciprocally ruin themselves at play, without the magistrates taking offence at it.

If there were at Caraccas, public walks, lyceums, cabinets of literature, coffee-houses, this, no doubt, would be the time to make them known. But, to the shame of this great city, I am obliged to announce,

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that there is not known in it any of these objects, characteristic of the progress of civilization. Every Spaniard lives in his house, as in a prison. He never stirs out but to go to church, or discharge the duties of his station. He does not seek ever to soften the rigours of his retreat by games of pastime; for he loves only that play which ruins, not the play which amuses.

Inhabitants.

The city of Caraccas contains, according to the parish certificates of 1802, thirty-one thousand two hundred and thirty-four souls; but according to the remark made on these returns, in Chap. III. there are from forty-one to forty-two thousand persons.—This population is divided between whites, slaves, freed-persons, and a very few Indians. The first form nearly the fourth of the whole; the slaves a third; the Indians a twentieth, and the freed-persons the rest.

Among the whites, there are six of the Castilian nobility: three marquises, and three counts. They all pretend to be noble; nearly one-third is recognized as such without any inquiry. To speak correctly, no white Spaniard is a commoner but when he is poor.

All the whites are either planters, merchants, military men, priests, monks, or employed in the administration of justice or finance. A white Spaniard, especially a Creole, how poor soever he may be, would think himself disgraced to owe his subsistence

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to the sweat of his brow, or the hardness of his hands. He suffers hunger, thirst, the inclemency of weather, with a stoicism so admirable as to give him not a single thought about any thing but fatigue. Nothing, according to him, degrades a man so much as labour. He believes that it is impossible to preserve one's dignity, and do honour to one's ancestors, except with a pen in the hand, a sword by the side, or a breviary under the eyes. Chap. III. contains every information that can be desired respecting the Creoles, and it is sufficient to refer the reader to it.

White Europeans.

The Europeans who are in this city, the seat of all the authorities, constitute at least two very different classes.

The first comprehends those who come from Spain with offices. The abuse they in general commit with these fruits of their long solicitations contributes not a little to the murmurs of the Creoles, who regard as an injustice every employment bestowed on any others than themselves. The luxury of these officers vying with that of the Creoles, who want powers to maintain the contest, presents, frequently enough, the picture in the fable, of the ox and the frog. If the attack was confined to acquired knowledge, the field of battle would no doubt remain with the Creoles; for, in general, those sent from Europe find in America people better instructed than themselves. The Creoles, as I have already said, have excellent natural abilities. They are fond of the sciences, and

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are capable of great application. We see among them profound theologians and eminent counsel. If we do not also see persons well skilled in political economy, it is because whatever is not in the canon or civil law is banished from their schools.

The second class of Europeans who go to Caracas is composed of those whom industry, or the desire of making a fortune, draws thither. The province of Catalonia, and that of Biscay are those which furnish the most. They have each an almost equal degree of industry; but the Biscayan, without fatiguing himself so much, knows better how to direct his. He is more enterprising in trade, more assiduous in agriculture than the Catalonian, who surpasses him, perhaps, in labour, but has not such enlarged views, or ideas so expanded. The first is never terrified by the magnitude or the danger of a speculation. He calculates much on chance, and the reputation of success. The second acts with greater caution. He undertakes only what is easy, and what he judges proportioned to his strength and his means. Cultivation never, or very rarely, enters into his projects of fortune. His spirit is purely mercantile.—They both distinguish themselves among the other citizens by the good faith of their transactions, and the punctuality of their payments.

The Spaniards from the Canary Islands, whom want, rather than ambition, forces to leave their native soil to establish themselves at Caraccas, carry there the same industry as the Catalonians and the Biscayans. Their genius assimilates them more to the latter than the former. In consequence, they

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are both of them useful citizens, as are all those who seek to gain their livelihood by honest ways, and make it their pride to prove by example, that man is born for labour.

Women.

The city of Caraccas is adorned with a sex, charming, mild, tender and seductive. We there see few blondes; but, with hair of the blackness of jet, the women have the white of alabaster. Their eyes, large and finely shaped, speak, in an expressive manner, that language which is of all countries, without being of all ages. The carnation of their lips is delightfully softened by the whiteness of their skins, and concurs to form that *ensemble*, which we denominate beauty. It is a pity that their stature does not correspond with their shape. We see few above the middle size, many below. It would be losing time to search for pretty feet. As they pass a great portion of their lives at their windows one would say, that nature had wished to embellish only that part of their bodies, which they expose to view.—Their attire is rather elegant. They feel a kind of vanity on being taken for French; but, whatever resemblance there may be in the dress, there is too little in the gait, the step, and grace, to permit the illusion to subsist.

The city of Caraccas has done very little for the education of the men, nothing for that of the women. No school is appropriated to the girls. They learn, therefore, only what their parents teach them; which

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is limited to a number of prayers, to reading badly, and spelling worse. None but a young man, inspired by love, can decypher their scrawls. They have neither dancing, drawing, nor even music masters. All that they learn is reduced to playing by rote a few tunes on the guitar and forte-piano. There are very few who have the first ideas of music. In spite of this defect of education, the women of Caraccas know pretty well how to unite social manners with decent behaviour, and the art of coquetry with the modesty of their sex.

This picture suits only those ladies whose husbands or relations enjoy a decent fortune, or exercise lucrative employments; for that portion of the fair sex whom fate condemns to procure their livelihood, know scarcely any other means of support than that of provoking the passions, to gain something by satisfying them. More than two hundred unfortunates pass the day, covered with rags, in the recesses of ruins, which they take care to keep shut, and, never go out, but at night, to draw from vice the gross subsistence of the morrow. Their dress is a white petticoat and veil, with a paste-board hat, covered with silk, to which is attached a tuft of tinsel and artificial flowers. The same dress often serves alternately, and on the same night, two or three of these immoral beings, whom idleness retains in this vicious life. This mode is in general accompanied, or at least always followed, by that of begging for charity. The last becomes the only one, as soon as old age and infirmity no longer permit them to depend on the produce of licentiousness.

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Domestic Slaves.

The class of domestic slaves in Caraccas is considerable. A man thinks himself rich only in proportion to the number of slaves in his house. It is necessary that he should have about him four times as many servants as their work requires; without which a littleness is manifested that announces a poverty which all hide as well as they can. A white woman of moderate fortune goes to mass on church days with two female negroes or mulattoes in her suite, though she does not possess in other property an equivalent capital. Those who are notoriously rich are followed by four or five servant women, and there remain as many more for each white of the same house who goes to another church. There are families in Caraccas with twelve and fifteen female servants, exclusive of the footmen in the service of the men. The most effectual mode of lessening the injury which this species of luxury does to the labourers of the country, would be to impose on each superfluous domestic a tax heavy enough to reduce the number. If vanity should prefer to pay rather than to give up, the product employed in some public establishment would compensate society for the loss of their labour.

Freed persons.

It is probable that there is not in the whole West-Indies a city where there are so many freed persons

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or descendants from them, in proportion to the other classes, as in Caraccas.

They there exercise all those handicrafts the whites despise. Every one who is a carpenter, joiner, cabinet-maker, mason, blacksmith, locksmith, tailor, shoemaker, goldsmith, &c. is or was a freed-man.—They excel in none of these trades, because, learning them mechanically, they constantly offend against their principles. Besides, indolence, which is in their nature, extinguishes in them that emulation to which the arts owe all their progress. Yet the carpenter's and mason's work is tolerably regular; but cabinet-making is still in its infancy. All these artisans, depressed by an indifference that seems more peculiar to their race, but generally to the soil they inhabit and the nation to which they are associated, work but very little, and, what appears in some degree contradictory, is, that they work much cheaper than European artificers. They exist but by means of the greatest sobriety, and in the midst of all sorts of privations. In general, overloaded with children, they live heaped together in miserable shells, where they have for their whole bed nothing but an ox-hide, and for sustenance, only the provisions of the country. The exceptions are very rare.

In this state of poverty, no kind of work can be required but they instantly demand an advance.—The smith never has either iron or coal. The carpenter never has wood—even for a table. They must have money to buy some. All have always the wants of a family, which he who orders their work must satisfy. Thus you begin by tying yourself to

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the workman you employ, and making yourself dependent upon him. It is no longer possible to threaten his sloth with applying to another, with whom, besides, the very same inconvenience would take place. The only resource then—is that of pressing and superintending the work, and, in spite of all these attentions, there are always indispositions, journeys, festivals, which exhaust the patience of the most phlegmatic. One is then very badly, or assuredly, very slowly served.

It is easy to perceive that this torpor in the tradespeople arises only from their aversion to labour. In truth, the major part never recollect that they have a trade till they are pressed by hunger. The reigning passion of this class of men is to pass their lives in religious exercises. They form exclusively corps of the various fraternities. There are few churches which have not one or more, all composed of free people of colour. Each has its uniform, which differs from the others only in colour. It is a kind of robe closed like the habit of a monk, the colour of which varies according to the brotherhood it belongs to. Some are of blue, red, black, &c. The fraternities assist at processions and burials. The members march in order, preceded by their banner. They gain by this nothing but the pleasure of being seen in a habit they believe commanding; they have one, however, on which they lavish peculiar care; it is that of Alta Gracia. Every free man of colour makes a sort of ostentatious display of this dress, and of the neatness and riches of this church. All the bearers of rosaries, who traverse the streets from night-fall

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till after nine o'clock, are composed solely of freed persons. There is no example of any of these persons having thought of cultivating the earth.

University.

The education of all the youth of Caraccas, and of all the archbishopric is entirely settled in a college and university united. The establishment of the college preceded by more than sixty years that of the university. They owe it to the piety and to the attention of the bishop, Anthony Gonzales d'Acunna, who died in 1682. At present, they teach in it nothing but Latin, and lecture only on philosophy and theology.

The increase of the city of Caraccas gave rise to the idea of affording a greater latitude, and different directions to the means of instruction. They demanded the foundation of an university, which the pope accorded, on the 19th of August, 1722, and Philip II. confirmed. The installation was performed on the 11th of August, 1725. They digested the statutes which were approved by the king, the 4th of May, 1727.

Since that era, and under these titles, the city of Caraccas possesses its university, to which, as I have just remarked, is united the college.

This double establishment has a school for reading and writing.

Three Latin schools, in each of which they lecture on rhetoric.

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Two professors of philosophy, one of whom is a secular priest, or layman, the other a Dominican.

Four professors of theology: two for the scholastic, one for the moral, and another for the positive or explanatory. This last must always be a Dominican.

One professor of the civil law.

One professor of the canon law.

One professor of physic.

The university and the college of Caraccas have a capital of 47,748 hard dollars, $6\frac{1}{2}$ reals, placed at interest, producing annually 2387 hard dollars, $3\frac{1}{2}$ reals. It is with this sum that they pay the twelve professors. They solicited of the king, in 1804, an addition, which probably will be granted.

All the degrees of bachelor, licentiate, and doctor, are received at the university. The first is conferred by the rector; the two others by the chancellor, who is at the same time a canon, with the title of master of the school.

The oath of every degree is to maintain the immaculate conception, neither to teach nor practise regicide or tyrannicide, and to defend the doctrine of St. Thomas.

They reckoned in the university-college of Caraccas in 1804, sixty-four boarders, and two hundred oppidans, divided as follows:

In the lower classes, comprehending rhetoric	202
In philosophy - - - - - -	140
In theology - - - - - -	36
In the canon and civil law - - - -	55
In physic - - - - - -	11
At the school for singing by note - -	22
Total -	466

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It is this nursery that furnishes the church with ministers, the bench with magistrates, and the public with protectors.

Police.

The Spaniards are, of all people known, those who do the least to establish a police for public tranquillity. The sobriety which is natural to them, and still more their phlegmatic character, render quarrels and tumults very rare. Hence there is never any noise in the streets of Caraccas. Every body there is silent, dull, grave. Three or four thousand persons go out of church without making any more noise than a tortoise walking on sand. So many French, restrained by the silence divine offices enjoin, would endeavour whilst quitting the church to obtain some compensation. Then, women and children would make by their chattering, a noise that would be heard a long way. Four times as many Spaniards do not make the buzzing of a wasp.

But if the magistrate has nothing to fear from boisterous offences, he would fall very short if his vigilance were to be on that account less active. Assassinations, thefts, frauds, treacheries, demand of him steps, investigations, measures capable of putting to the proof the most ardent zeal, and baffling the most penetrating sagacity.

The Spaniard is not more exempt, perhaps he is less than any other, from that vindictive spirit, so much the more dangerous as it seeks to strike only in the dark, and of that rancour which covers itself with the

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veil of friendship, the better to create an opportunity to gratify itself. He, who from his rank in society can revenge himself only by his own hands, manifests very little or no anger when he receives an offence; but from that moment he watches an opportunity which he scarcely ever lets escape, of plunging a dagger in the heart of his new enemy, safe in flying for refuge to some privileged church, in order that the ecclesiastical tribunal might undertake to present, as an unfortunate accident, the most premeditated murder, and as a pardonable action, an act the most deserving of death.

They, in peculiar, reproach the Spaniards of Andalusia with this criminal disposition. I have been assured at Caraccas, that these wicked transactions have taken place only since 1778, the epoch in which the liberty of trading with the provinces of Venezuela, exclusively granted to the company of Guipuscoa, was extended to almost all the ports of Spain, and drew to Caraccas a number of Spaniards from all the provinces, particularly of Andalusia.

It is a fact, that almost all the assassinations which take place in Caraccas are committed by Europeans. Those with which the Creoles may be accused are as rare as the thefts that may be imputed to the first.—The whites, or pretended whites of the country, whom idleness, and all the vices it engenders, keep in sottishness and the most abject condition, and the freedmen, who find it too irksome to live by their labour, are the only persons that can be reproached with the thefts committed in Caraccas.

False measures, false weights, adulteration of com-

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modities and provisions, are also common offences, because these are regarded less as acts of roguery than as proofs of an address of which they are vain.

This is what ought, no doubt, to occupy the most vigilant police. Many other objects ought equally to partake of its care, such as the supplying the city with necessaries, a duty, that so far from constituting the eulogium of the magistrates charged with it, accuses, on the contrary, their negligence. Would one believe, that the city of Caraccas, the capital of provinces that might furnish horned cattle to all the foreign possessions of America, is herself, many days in the year destitute of butcher's meat? That the residence of a captain-general, the seat of an archbishop, of a royal audience, of the principal courts of appeal, a population of more than forty thousand souls, in fine, a garrison of two thousand men should experience scarcity in the midst of abundance?

If filth does not accumulate in the streets, the frequency of rain is to be thanked, not the care of the police; for they are never cleaned except in honour of some procession. Those through which none passes are covered with a grass known by the name of dog-grass, the *panicum dactylum* of Linnæus.

Mendicity is, in all the countries of the world, within the cognizance of the police, yet it seems absolutely estranged from that of Caraccas. The streets are full of poor of both sexes, who have for their whole subsistence only the produce of alms, and who prefer this mode to that of labour. Religion, very badly interpreted on this subject, forbids, among the Spaniards, all inquiry into the ability which age and

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health gives the mendicant to procure a livelihood in some other manner than that of holding out the hand. They believe, or at least they act as if they believed, that the recommendation of the Evangelist to bestow charity is an invitation to demand it.

As soon as this opinion is entertained, it is under the protection, instead of being under the conrol of the police. At every hour of the day, the houses are assailed by beggars. The impotent and the robust, the old and the young, the blind and those with their eyes, have all an equal right to charity. It is refused or given according to the ability to bestow, not according to the degree of the necessity of him who asks.

The stranger has at first a great deal of trouble to reconcile this blind spirit of charity among the Spaniards with the disgusting picture which offers itself at night of the poor lying down in the streets, along the walls of the church, the palace of the arohbishop, &c. without any security from the dew, so very dangerous in the torrid zone, nor from any other inclemency of the weather. But, when this is well examined, we perceive that this disorder arises on the contrary from an excess of piety. Those who are taken for unfortunates are only beggars whom inebriating liquors prevent from choosing a better asylum, and who avoid the beds of the hospitals because the gates closed at an early hour deprive them of those precious moments, in which they consume in taffia the receipts of the day. The police knows of these abuses without being able under pain of impiety, to repress them. The livery of providence that covers the mendicant, exempts him from all rule,

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frees him from every censure, and renders him inviolable.

To judge properly of the number of beggars who wander in the streets it is necessary only to know that the archbishop makes a general charitable donation every Saturday of a half shilling, or the sixteenth part of a hard dollar, and that he dispenses at each of these pious works the sum of seventy-five or seventy-six hard dollars; which makes at least two hundred beggars. And in this list are not included the bashful indigents who surpass this number, and among whom the worthy prelate, Don Francis d'Ibarra, a Creole of Caraccas, secretly distributes his revenues.

Would not a police well administered judiciously select those who beg because they cannot gain a livelihood, and would it not provide for their subsistence in houses appropriated to that purpose? Would it not assign to the others a labour proportioned to their strength, which might procure them maintenance and something to spare? Do they believe that obliging men to work is a deed less agreeable to the Deity than that of protecting them in the bosom of idleness, where they lead a life full of vices which, at times, offend against good manners, religion, and public order? All these abuses would disappear, no doubt, by the execution of municipal laws. May God grant, that the prejudices of custom may give place to reason, and that Caraccas may at last enjoy the benefits of a wise administration, on which depend the safety, peace and happiness of the citizens!

The police of Caraccas is in a number of hands, perhaps in too many; for public superintendance re-

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quires a central point where should terminate all complaints, all informations which communicate to the enlightened magistrate the conduct of every individual subject to his inspection. By this means, he is rarely deceived by unfaithful relations, by lying reports. Besides having the clew to the intrigues of all suspected persons, he incessantly directs his care and vigilance towards whatever threatens the public tranquillity. In this point of view, the justice of which is proved by our large cities, the common council, composed of twenty members, aided by the magistrates of the wards, who are commissaries of the police, spread through the city, would be more than sufficient to manage the springs of the police. But, the presence of the authorities, who wish to participate in the prerogatives of command, has caused a division of all matters of police between the government, the lieutenant of the governor, and a member of the audience, who, under the title of judge of the province, exercises, during three months, the duties of the police, in affairs that demand no removal. It follows from thence, that the common council is stripped of its natural jurisdiction, except in those cases requiring pains and trouble, which the other authorities consider as beneath them.

Communications with the Interior.

Caraccas, the centre of all the political, judicial, fiscal, military, commercial and religious affairs of its dependencies, is naturally also that of all the interior communications. The vast extent of the country,

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and the smallness of its population, make the location of roads a measure of government, and the fact does not in the least contradict the circumstance.—They are almost every where traced out, and nothing more. The sloughs and inundations of the rivers, over which there are neither bridges nor ferry-boats, render the roads impassable in the rainy seasons; and in no time of the year are they convenient. They count the distance by days and not by leagues; but from my own experience, I calculate that every day's journey is ten leagues, each of two thousand geometrical paces.

The orders which the government sends to many of the interior towns arrive by express, in the same manner as all the accounts they render, or the complaints they prefer to it. Posts are forwarded regularly and periodically, from the capital only for Maracaïbo, Porto Cavello, Santa Fe, Cumana, and Guiana. All the towns lying on the road to these five principal places enjoy the advantages of the mail.

The post for Maracaïbo leaves Caraccas every Thursday at six o'clock in the evening. It carries the letters for Victoria, Tulmero, Maracay, Valencia, St. Philip, Porto Cavello, and Coro. It takes twenty days to go from Caraccas to Maracaïbo. It comes from Maracaïbo to Caraccas only every fortnight, but from Porto Cavello it arrives at Caraccas every Tuesday.

The sixth and the twenty-second of every month a mail sets off from Caraccas for Santa Fe. It carries the correspondence of San Carlos, Guanara, Araura,

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Tocuyo, Barquesimeto, Varinas, Merida, Carthagena, St. Martha, and Peru. It arrives, or ought to arrive, at Caraccas, the fourth and the twentieth of every month. Its ordinary passage from Caraccas to Santa Fe is forty-two days.

The post from Cumana and Guiana, arrives at Caraccas once a month. It is earlier or later according to the state of the roads and the rivers. The letters of Guiana go directly from Barcelona by one carrier, and those of Cumana and Margaretta, by another.—The last arrive at their destination in twelve days, those of Guiana at theirs in thirty.

With Spain.

The official correspondence from Spain arrives at Caraccas every month. A king's packet-boat sails within the three first days of every month, from Corunna, touches at the Canaries, to leave the letters for the islands, then calls at the Havanna, and deposits, as it passes Porto-Rico, the mails destined as well for that island, as those for the government of Caraccas. These last are instantly sent by one of the little vessels devoted to this kind of service.

In time of war, the packet from Spain, instead of touching at Porto-Rico, deposits at Cumana the letters for Caraccas and its dependencies, carries to Carthagena those for the kingdom of Santa Fe, and always end at the Havanna, from whence the departure for Spain is generally periodical. The answers from Caraccas, even those which are official, are sent to Spain by the merchant vessels dispatched from Guayra to Cadiz.

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Merchants.

The chapter on commerce, containing all the details which the reader can reasonably desire respecting that carried on in Caraccas, his conscience and mine require only that I should refer him to it; but, he has a right to demand of me the names of the wholesale merchants who trade largely, as well on their own account, as on commission; and it is to discharge this debt that I here place the list.

Abazolo. (Don Bruno-Ignacio)
Aguerrebera. (Don Pedro-Ignacio)
Alzualde. (Don Geronimo)
Arambura. (Don Francisco)
Argos. (Don Jose-Joaquin de)
Arrizurieta. (Don Antonio)
Baraciarte. (Don Martin)
Barrera. (Don Miquel-Antonio)
Bolet. (Don Jayme)
Borges. (Don Thomas)
Carvallo. (Don Antonio)
Cortegoso. (Don Jose-Antonio)
Dias Flores. (Don Antonio)
Echenique. (Don Juan-Jose)
Eduardo. (Don Juan)
Eduardo. (Don Pedro)
Emazabel. (Don Joaquin)
Etchezuria. (Don Manuel)
Etchezuria. (Don Pablo)
Etchezuria. (Don Pedro)
Fornes. (Don Juan)

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Garay, (Don Jose)
Garcia Jove, (Don Doaquin)
Garcia. (Don Jose Manuel)
Godavy Codina. (Don Jose)
Gonzales. (Don Salvador)
Galguera. (Don Juan-Vicente)
Herrera. (Don Juan-Pascual)
Itturalde. (Don Juan-Francisco)
Itturalde. (Don Juan-Bantista)
Key Munos. (Don Fernando)
Landesta. (Don Jose)
Larrain. (Don Juan-Bernardo)
Linares. (Don Vicente)
Lizarraga. (Don Manuel-de)
Llamosas. (Don Jose-de-Las)
Lopes Mendez. (Don Isidora-Antonio)
Marti. (Don Mariano)
Martines-de-Abia. (Don Felix)
Mayora. (Don Simon)
Olivert. (Don Juan)
Orea. (Don Telesforo)
Quintero. (Don Isidoro)
Ramirez. (Don Prospero)
Romero. (Don Antonio-Jose)
Savinon. (Don Nicolas)
Segura. (Don Joaquin)
Ugarte. (Don Juan Ignacio)
Ugarte. (Don Simon)
Villa-Santa. (Don Felipe)
Zubieta. (Don Juan-Antonio)
Zulueta. (Don Francisco)

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Guayra.

If the port of Caravalleda had not been abandoned by its inhabitants, on the motives already related in Chap. II. Guayra would never have been any thing more than the abode of a few fishermen, or a shipping-place of some plantation. The difficulty of acquiring a population for Caravalleda induced the thought of choosing another place to serve as a port for Caraccas, and the preference was given to the spot which Guayra occupies at this day. Navigation has not gained by this exchange; for the sea there is far more heavy and inconvenient than in any other port. (See what I have already said on this head, in the account of Guayra, in the second Chapter, Vol. I. page 91.)

The city, or, according to the Spaniards, who refuse the name of town to all those places where there is no common council, the town of Guayra is so placed among very lofty mountains, that the stones which fall from their tops frequently occasion it serious damage. It has no visual horizon except what the sea forms on the north. This easily explains the cause of those great heats which are experienced there during nine months of the year. The thermometer of Reaumur commonly rises from twenty-five to twenty-eight degrees. A year never elapses without the months of July, August, and September being marked by putrid and malignant fevers, followed by death, who, in preference, reaps his harvest from the newly arrived Europeans.

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The order and division of the town of Guayra partake of the inequalities and wretchedness of the place where it is situated. The streets are narrow, badly paved, not on a line, and the houses meanly built. There is nothing regular or curious but the batteries which defend it. The government has sought to make it only a military post, and its commerce only a shipping-place for the capital. Very few merchants reside there. All the business is done at Caraccas. Every merchant goes to Guayra to receive the cargo addressed to him from Europe, or that which he buys. In either case, all the articles received on commission, or bought, are sent to Caraccas to be sold. There remains at Guayra only what the port consumes. All commodities are purchased as well as sold at Caraccas, and are sent to Guayra only to be embarked.

The road between these two towns is steep and cut straight down from one to the other, but good in dry weather. It becomes laborious in rain. They reckon from Guayra to Caraccas five short leagues, which mules loaded perform in five hours; under the saddle they do it, without going out of their step, in three hours and a half. In going from Guayra, one ascends, according to the measure taken by Mr. Humboldt, about six hundred and forty toises, and from thence the distance is two hundred and thirty-four to arrive at Caraccas. It is but seldom that the traveller crosses the whole mountain in one stage.—At the elevation of five hundred and sixty-six toises, he finds an inn, which the Spaniards call *Venta*,

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where he rests the beast he is mounted on whilst he rests himself.

The water drank at Guayra comes from a little river, or rather rivulet, the source of which is on the mountain at the distance of two leagues from the sea. This water, not very agreeable to the taste, because it is always warm, contracts in passing over beds of sarsaparilla, an antivenereal virtue that is not altogether lost.

The town of Guayra is governed by a commandant of the place, who is at the same time lieutenant of justice, that is to say, he is invested with the right of judging, in the first instance, on all civil affairs, under an appeal to the royal audience. His principal duty is to give an account every day to the captain-general of the transactions in the road. He cannot give leave to any stranger to go to Caraccas without first having the permission of the captain-general, which is accorded easily enough, provided the motives alledged by the new comer appear reasonable.

The ordinary garrison of the place is a company detached from the regiment of Caraccas. In time of war it is reinforced by other troops of the line, and the militia of Caraccas.

The population of Guayra is six thousand persons, of whom three thousand are in the gun-boats, seven hundred and eleven form the garrison, or are in the guarda costas or gallies. Their almoner discharges, with respect to them, all clerical functions. The town has only one parochial church served by a rector.

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Porto Cavello.

The port of Borburata, situated a league to the west of Porto Cavello, was a long time in the exclusive possession of the maritime intercourse with the part of the province of Venezuela, which is at this day maintained with Porto Cavello; not that the first port has any pretensions to rival this; for it is neither commodious for shipping, nor convenient for the province.

Chance having, at the commencement of the conquest, led some vessels to Borburata, the first conquerors made a port of it, and the governor Villegas, in 1549, sent there, as a germ for the population of the city, twenty-four men, of whom four were nominated aldermen, and two magistrates, as the constituent parts of the common council.

Foreign vessels, which the contraband trade attached to these latitudes, interested in making their discharges on this coast clandestinely, and in avoiding the frequented ports, chose for their operations, the spot where at this day is Porto-Cavello. Some fishermen soon constructed there a few huts, to which the Dutch smugglers added some others. This port thus remained for a long time occupied by people of this sort, who made it rather a dependency of Curaçao, than of the Spanish government.

So soon as they perceived the consequence, by no means flattering to the public tranquillity or Spanish sovereignty, which this hamlet assumed, they endeavoured to substitute for it a more legal village. Arms

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were employed three or four times, but they experienced such a resistance, that they renounced the attempt, and Porto-Cavello became, from this state of independence, the resort of every thing the interior towns contained, that was villainous, and could escape the arm of justice. Such, nearly, was Porto-Cavello when the company of Guipuscoa opened its correspondence with these provinces.

One of the first cares of this company was to profit by the excellence of the road of Porto-Cavello, and to establish there one of its principal factories. Its maritime force furnished the means. Instantly that mass of men, without decency and without law, began to live under social regulations, and by the progressive admixture of Europeans permitted no more than the vestiges of its original corruption to be discovered. Yet the space of nearly a century has not been able to exempt Porto-Cavello from affording an asylum to persons of both sexes from the interior of the provinces, whom bad conduct or turbulence compel to fly from their families or the police they disturb. Curaçao furnishes also its contingent in persons of colour, slaves or free.

The company constructed a superb pier ninety-two feet long and twelve wide, for the accommodation of its vessels, and some forts for their defence. An edifice more remarkable for its size than its beauty, more solid than elegant, became its factory, and is so still in spite of the extinction of its privileges. The system it adopted of not employing in its vessels, nor in its counting-houses, any but persons from its own province, must necessarily have led a great number

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of Biscayans into all the places where it made any establishments. It is not, therefore, surprizing to find at Porto-Cavello the class of Europeans composed in a great measure of Biscayans, who are as much remarked for decency of manners and industry, as for the singularity of their language.

The city, properly so called, is situated so near the sea, that it occupies many spots very lately under water, and which have been raised by encroachments above the level of the ocean. It appears, from the circumference of the city, that those who traced it out did not think it would soon increase so much as to require for the accommodation of its inhabitants double the space they had at first assigned to it. The original town is surrounded by the sea, except for about a hundred toises on the west, where they have contrived a canal, that affords a communication to the southern with the northern part of the sea, and consequently makes the city an island, from whence there is no going out but over a bridge at the end of which is placed the main guard, and a gate that they shut every evening.

Those who feel themselves too much confined within the inclosure of the town, would naturally seek to fix themselves without; and as the nature of the ground left no power of choice, they placed themselves on the only point of land which the water did not cover, on the west of the city. The houses clandestinely erected against ordinances, that prohibit any species of building within a certain distance of fortified places, were subjected to none of the rules of genius, because they were merely tolerated, and re-

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garded as being bound to disappear at the voice of necessity, or the caprice of the commander of the town. It proceeds from hence that the first street formed, which they call the street of Heringa, is neither on a line, nor of any regular width. The number of houses built by the side of one another, was not long in becoming sufficiently considerable to give offence to the commandant of the place. He represented to his superiors, that this kind of little borough, whose importance would soon rival that of Porto-Cavello, might injure, by its proximity, the defence of the city; and that its position was such, that the fort at the entrance of the harbour could not use its guns without destroying the houses, the proprietors of which would not fail to demand payment from the king should the presence of an enemy oblige the fort to induce involuntary but inevitable damage.—An order was issued to the inhabitants to abandon the spot; but, on an offer they made of running all risks in the event of an attack, without even pretending to any indemnity for the destruction occasioned by a defence, they obtained permission to retain their houses, and even to erect others; so that what was till then only tolerated became a conditional right.

From that period, they have built with more confidence, more solidity and more order. The new streets have been laid out on a line; the public squares, places for markets, &c. regulated, and this quarter, considered as an extension of the city, is become the residence of merchants and tradesmen.

The whole population of Porto-Cavello is about seven thousand five hundred persons, of whom not

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one, excepting the military and officers in the administration, boasts of his nobility.

The general occupation of the whites is commerce and navigation. Their principal and almost only connexions are with the ports of the same continent, and the neighbouring colonies; for although the port has been open since 1798 to the trade with the mother country, they nevertheless make very little use of this permission. Four or five ships carry every thing that arrives annually from Spain, and whatever they send there; whilst more than sixty vessels of different sizes, are employed in the coasting trade. Curaçao enters into this commerce for at least one third, and Jamaica for another. If we are to judge from the entries at the custom-house, those connexions are of very little importance, because the ladings are of small value and the ostensible returns still less. But specie is clandestinely embarked at Curaçao and Jamaica in dry goods which, before they show themselves in the port, are landed on the coast, or discharged even in port, according to the information they obtain, or the opportunity they can get.

Porto-Cavello is the deposit of all the eastern part of the province of Venezuela. Its stores furnish to the jurisdictions of Valencia, San Carlos, Barquisemeto, St. Philip, and one part of the Vales of Aragoa, all the merchandize consumed within them. It is also at Porto-Cavello that a great portion of the articles cultivated within those districts arrives. Twenty Europeans, more or less substantial, more or less enterprizing, carry on the commerce of Porto-Cavello.

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Those of whom I have any peculiar knowledge to induce me to mention their names, are,

Amat. (Don Christovale)
Burgos. (Don Bernardo)
Delgada. (Don Jose)
Herrera. (Don Jose)
Herrera. (Don Pedro)
Hillas. (Don Gaspar)
Itturundo. (Don Manuel)
Villa-Santas. (Don)

This port, the best in all Terra-Firma, as has been already said in Chap. II. presents to owners of privateers the easiest means of repairing their old, and of building new vessels. This advantage renders it the point to which all the vessels of the neighbouring ports resort to be repaired. The port of Guayra which receives so great a number of them, has only Porto-Cavello for refitting, calking, and building.

Porto-Cavello, to render it the first port in America, wants only a little more salubrity. It is not exactly that the air there is less pure than elsewhere, or that the sea-breeze does not regularly moderate the excessive heat of the latitude. The proof of this is, that the crews of the vessels in the road, who do not communicate with the shore, are never infected with the malignant complaints which those in the town cannot escape.

One would at first imagine, on beholding the country, that a sort of marshes covered with mangeneels and formed by the sea on the east side of the city, exhale pestilential miasma, which occasioned insalubrity. But this is not so: for it is observed, that the

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houses already built, and which they continue to build, on lots taken from these very marshes, are more healthy than those at a greater distance.

It is not the same, even on the south part of the city, where an argillaceous flat of considerable extent receives all the rain water, without any other means of its escaping than by evaporation, and draining, which can be scarcely any through a soil of clay. In this state of stagnation the water soon corrupts; it becomes green and fetid, and the first rains, after an interval of drought, occasion pestilential exhalations to arise, capable of affecting the most robust constitution, and corrupting the most healthy body. Those who inhabit this quarter of the town are in a peculiar degree the victims of this treacherous neighbourhood. This fatal cause acts still more directly and destructively on Europeans not seasoned to the climate.

In 1793, a Spanish fleet, commanded by lieutenant-general Ariztizabal, anchored at Porto-Cavello, and remained there from July to December. It lost the third of its crews. It would have lost much more without the care and skill of Doct. Don Gasper de Juliac, physician of the king at Porto-Cavello. In fact, he possesses talents so distinguished, that Terra-Firma and the neighbouring islands consult him in all serious cases.

In 1802, the French ships, the Tourville and Zélé, the corvette Utile, and schooner Adelaide, were sent on an expedition from St. Domingo to Porto-Cavello. They arrived on the 5th of July. As soon as their crews touched the shore they were attacked with the

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disorder of the country, and in the space of twenty-four hours, there died of officers and seamen, one hundred and sixty-one persons. That is, from the Tourville, a hundred and six; the Zélé, thirty-three; the corvette Utile, ten; and from the schooner Adelaide, twelve. A longer stay exposing these vessels to the certain loss of the rest of their men, they were ordered away without having accomplished the object of their mission. It was observed, that the Zélé, whose captain was more difficult in permitting his crew to visit the city, preserved herself many days from the contagion, and did not begin to be infected till after her communication with the shore was established. It ought not, however, to be concealed, that the opportunities for intemperance afforded by the town has a great share in the malignity with which it is reproached. The epidemic disorder at Porto-Cavello, as in all the countries placed within the tropics, on a level with the sea, and on the coast, is known by the name of the Yellow Fever, against which medicine has hurled so many manifestoes without deranging its progress, or moderating its fury.

Reason and humanity prescribe, however, to the Spanish government to remove these pools of stagnant water which harbour at Porto Cavello the germs of this pest, by giving to the water a flow, which the situation renders easy and cheap. Filling up the parts most hollow, and drains well directed towards the sea or the river, which is not far off, would soon accomplish this object. I have frequently heard it said on the spot, and by persons of intelligence, that 20,000 hard dollars, not wasted, would render Porto Cavello as healthy as any other port of Terra Firma.

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The water drank at Porto Cavello comes from a river that falls into the sea at a quarter of a league to the west. It is conducted into the city by canals maintained with more care than success, and distributed to the public in cisterns placed at convenient distances. This water is good in dry weather; but in heavy rains it is loaded with earthy particles, and the use of it then is neither wholesome nor agreeable. This inconvenience is remedied by means of filtering stones. The misfortune is, that these articles of luxury not being within the reach of every one, the stomach of the poor remains exposed to all its deleterious consequences.

The city, considered as a fortified place, is principally under the orders of a military commander. He exercises almost every authority. He punishes capitally, and has also, in the first instance, the administration of civil justice, under a right of appeal to the royal audience.

The inhabitants have solicited the establishment of a common council. They have been able to attain, for the present, only a single magistrate renewable every year. It might even be said that since the year 1800, when this civil officer was established, there has resulted from it more inconveniences than advantages, because the part of the jurisdiction which the law gives him, being rooted in the authority that the commandant has always exercised on it, the difficulty of extracting it occasions every instant contests followed by quarrels always fatal to the general harmony.

It is not in the places of worship that religion shines

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at Porto Cavello. There is but one single parish-church, situated near the harbour, and not one monastery. They have, however, undertaken, at the southern extremity of the city, the construction of a church which the whole mass of generosity and alms has permitted to rise no more than breast high. No sooner was it perceived that want of money was about to condemn this beginning edifice never to be more than a monument of the lukewarmness of the faithful of Porto Cavello, than the ministers of the church adopted a mode the efficacy of which has not answered the attempt.

They agreed to impose, in future, no other penance than the obligation of carrying to the foot of the work, stones, the number and weight of which should be regulated according to the heinousness of the sin.—But whether they never offend the Deity at Porto Cavello, or that the sinner thinks himself pardoned by the mere confession of his faults, or that the penance was too public for the sins they wished to conceal, the truth is, that they have gained by this measure only a few dozen stones carried by old negroes and old women, who were very soon tired of such an exercise.

I have however seen young women carry stones for the projected church, some in the hopes of fixing the affections of inconstant husbands, others to obtain an offspring all the virtue of marriage could not procure. Some carried also in order to find lost goods. Unfortunately not one of these prayers were granted. Nothing more was wanted to prove that God, in refusing to this spot the power of miracles, declared it unworthy to pos-

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ness one of his temples. Project and execution, all was abandoned. Grass and briars now cover both the work began, and the materials ready to be employed in it.

There are at Porto Cavello two hospitals, one for the troops, the other for private persons; the first is known by the name of the military hospital, the other by that of the hospital of charity.

The garrison consists in peace of a company of the regiment of Caraccas. In time of war they reinforce it with troops of the line and militia, and at all times there is a body of three or four hundred galley-slaves who are employed in public works.

The administration is composed of a treasurer, a cashier, and a number of clerks, a store-keeper, a searcher, supervisor, and about thirty revenue officers, to prevent smuggling.

Porto Cavello is thirty leagues from Caraccas by the way of Guayra, and forty-eight by Valencia, Maracay, Tulmero, Victoria and San Pedro.

The thermometer of Reaumur rises in the month of August to 26 degrees, and in January to 18 and 19.

Its latitude is 10 degrees, 20 minutes north.

Its longitude 70 degrees 30 minutes west from the meridian of Paris.

Valencia.

The city of Valencia was founded in 1555 under the government of Villacinda. The object of the conqueror in founding it, was to establish a port nearer

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to Caraccas to facilitate the conquest of this country, which Faxardo had with good reason so much extolled. The order was to lay out the city on the bank of lake Tacarigoa, now of Valencia; but Alonzo Dias Moreno, who was charged with the execution of it, judged, like a man of sense, the unwholesomeness of the borders of the lake to be a law for removing the city to a greater distance. He chose a spot half a league west from the lake in a beautiful plain whose fertility and pureness of air, seemed to invite man to make it his abode. It is there that the city was placed under the name of the king's Valencia. It is in 10 degrees 9 minutes north latitude, and 70 degrees 45 minutes west longitude, from the meridian of Paris. Reaumur's thermometer is generally between 16 and 23 degrees.

Its population, according to the ecclesiastical verifications of 1801, is six thousand five hundred and forty-eight souls; but from other information more accurate, it consists of more than eight thousand persons; and if one were to judge from the space it occupies, double would be allowed. Every one there is a Creole, and the issue of very ancient families, excepting some from the Canaries, and a very few Biscayans. The streets are wide, and for the most part paved. The houses are built like those in Caraccas, but not with stone.

There is but one parish church, served by two vicars and a vestry man. It is tolerably well built, and in the eastern part of a beautiful square, from which it receives, and to which it gives in its turn, an embellishment, that constitutes the principal decoration of the city.

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At the extremity of the town they were building in 1804, a church dedicated to our lady of la Chandeleur. The project belongs to the Canarians residing at Valencia. The execution depends on their liberality, and the alms of others of the faithful.

The Franciscans have a monastery occupied by eight monks, whose services are very useful for spiritual aid, for which a single parish church would hardly suffice. This monastery has long felt the misery that the indolence of the inhabitants, during two centuries, has caused to reign at Valencia: it is, perhaps, to its original poverty that it owes the glory of being at this day without a rival. Its church is well built, exceedingly neat, and very elegant. The monastery itself has obtained some repairs, which announce that the times of its distress are passed.

It is not fifty years since the inhabitants of Valencia enjoyed the well merited reputation of being the most lazy in the province. They feared lest labour, the exclusive portion, according to them, of the husbandman, should make them forget the nobility they had received from their ancestors. It never entered into their ideas that a man could pretend to any respect except when stretched out in a hammock, or running the streets with a sword by his side. Every other attitude appeared ignoble, vile and contemptible. Want of every sort in vain conspired against this indolence. It obtained only lamentations and useless invocations to Providence. At length, their inaction was such, that the commandant of the place sent to Valencia was obliged, in order to secure the subsistence of the town, to order every inhabitant

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to plant, under very severe penalties, a certain quantity of provisions. The infractions were actually punished. By degrees they were familiarized with the idea, that the labours of the field were an honour to man, instead of a disgrace, and they betook themselves to the cultivation of the products of the land.

Since this happy revolution, Valencia loses sensibly the melancholy appearance poverty gave it, to assume that which ease affords. It is not that the proportion of what its inhabitants apply in commerce yet corresponds with their number, or the extent or goodness of their lands; but the flight is taken; prejudice is destroyed; reason occupies its place; indolence no more usurps the honours of virtue; a just emulation has introduced an activity which is making daily progress. Every thing, therefore, induces the hope that cultivation and commerce will be as much honoured at Valencia by future generations, as they have been neglected and despised by the past.

Its situation gives it advantages over all the other towns of Venezuela, of which it ought to be ashamed not to have profited till now. Separated by only ten leagues of good road from Porto Cavello, it enjoys the facility of transporting thither its commodities at a very little expence; and after the completion of another road already opened, which reduces the distance to six leagues, the communication will be still less expensive and more short. But it is not for cultivation only that the situation of Valencia is to be valued; it is equally so for trade.

Every thing from the interior of the country shipped at Porto-Cavello goes through Valencia, as that

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which is destined for Guayra passes through Caracas. The valleys of Aragoa; the districts of St. Philip; St. Charles; St. John the Baptist of Pao; of Tocuyo; of Barquisimeto, and of the whole plain, can get their produce and animals to Porto-Cavello in no other way than by passing through Valencia. Why then have not the citizens of this town, so favoured by its situation, thought of forming an *entrepot* for the articles destined for Porto-Cavello, and for the merchandize required by the interior? Would it not be preferable to the inhabitant of the interior that the focus of his exchanges should be more within his reach? Does not he who saves his time, turn it to profit? The commerce of Caraccas has no other base than these motives. Guayra is but its shipping place, as Porto-Cavello is naturally that of Valencia. If the limits of this description permitted me to give more room to this subject it would be easy to prove that there are evén more reasons in favour of Valencia, than of Caraccas. But it is sufficient, no doubt, to have pointed out the principal ones, for others to present themselves to every imagination not altogether stupid.

The inhabitants of Valencia have open dispositions, but are more calculated for science than cultivation.

The city is so much the better furnished with necessaries, as the country produces every sort of provision and fruit in the greatest abundance, and of a most exquisite flavour, and as its plains furnish its markets, and at a very low price, with every kind of animal they can consume.

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Maracay.

In the eastern part of the Lake of Valencia is a village called Maracay. I agree that, not having the title either of city or of town, it ought not to appear in this chapter; but it is in itself so interesting that I feel a satisfaction in endeavouring to make my reader participate in the delightful sensations I experienced, in 1801, during the short stay I made there.

Maracay is situated in the famous valleys of Aragoa, of which I have so often had occasion to speak. It is near enough to the lake to enjoy its advantages, and sufficiently removed to have nothing to fear from its malignant influence. Its sandy soil renders it healthy, but hot. This village, which thirty years ago scarcely merited the appellation of a hamlet, presents a view which enchants the traveller. Three-fourths of its houses are built of stone, and with as much elegance, as solidity. One peculiarity which will for ever remain engraved in my memory, is, that they all appear of the same date, and that a very late one. The streets are not paved: this omission is perceived only when the sand, raised by the wind, forms a whirl, that incommodes the eye. A new house of worship, large, and of most regular architecture, serves as a parish church. There is, at Maracay, for all the services of divine worship, but one vicar; and for the whole civil authority, but one lieutenant of justice. He is a judge of the police, and in the first instance.

The inhabitants of this village, to the number of eight

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thousand four hundred, have not less right to the admiration of the observer. Not one is infected with the vanity of birth, nor the pride of distinction.

Industry, activity, in a word, employment, forms the basis of their affections. A fortunate emulation renders cultivation the reigning passion. The numerous plantations of cotton, indigo, coffee, corn, &c. laid out with design, and maintained with care, attest in a manner by no means equivocal, how laborious these men are, and show the source of all their comfort. It might well be doubted, whether the major part are not Biscayans; for they are, of all the European Spaniards in Terra Firma, those who apply themselves most to cultivation. The lovely plantations that one beholds with enthusiasm in the environs of Maracay, extend themselves through all the vales of Aragoa. Whether you enter it by Valencia, or whether you arrive there by the mountains of San Pedro, which separate it from Caraccas, you fancy yourself transported amidst another people, and into a country possessed by a nation the most industrious, and the most agricultural. Nothing is seen, in an extent of fifteen leagues from east to west, which these valleys occupy, but colonial productions, most ingeniously watered; water-mills, and elegant buildings, for the purpose of fabricating and preparing those very products. What is still more remarkable, is, that this great activity appears exclusively attached to this spot. The free persons, who in no other part do scarcely any thing, work in the valleys of Aragoa for moderate wages, so that the proprietor is obliged to buy only the small number of slaves necessary for

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the maintenance of his household. Extraordinary labours, such as clearing, planting, weeding, and harvesting, are performed by free men paid so much by the day.

Tulmero.

Tulmero, situated also in the Vales of Aragoa, two leagues from Maracay, is likewise quite modern, well built, and the residence of a number of planters; but it is peculiarly the abode of all the officers, factors, and persons employed in the administration of the tobacco, cultivated in its vicinage, on account of the king. There is a handsome church, a vicar for the religious department, and a lieutenant of justice for the civil. Its population is eight thousand persons.

Victoria.

Six leagues east from Tulmero, and on the road that leads to Caraccas, is the village of Victoria, founded by the missionaries, and which was composed solely of Indians, until industry, having fixed her seat in the valleys of Aragoa, drew thither a concourse of laborious whites, one part of whom settled themselves at Victoria. The village soon assumed another shape. The lands in the environs were cultivated, and their produce placed decent houses in the room of Indian huts. The site of the village is still with the same inequalities it received from nature, and there is every appearance of its preserving them for

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some time yet to come; for, in order to embellish it, they are solely occupied in the construction of a church, the beauty and size of which will dispute the palm with the handsomest cathedrals in America. Still its labours, to which the zeal and care of the governor, Don Miquel de Adaraga, have given activity, have been suspended during the administration which has followed its own.

They reckon at Victoria seven thousand eight hundred inhabitants, of all colours. The whites, who form a part of them, have solicited the king to bestow on their village the more pompous title of city, of which the establishment of a common council would be the consequence, as it was the object. But the opinion of the ministry being, as we have said in Chapter V. that these sorts of institutions are more prejudicial than useful to the royal authority, their request has been neither granted, nor rejected. It has been only eluded, by not being answered. In the mean time, Victoria preserves the humble rank of a village, under a lieutenant of justice, and a governor.

Although the inhabitants are more active, than in many other parts of the province, they yet are not so much so as those of the rest of the vales of Aragoa. What affords a most palpable proof of this, is, that the inhabitants of Victoria are fond of play to an excess, and it is well known that this passion allies itself with difficulty to the real love of labour.

It is in this village that the staff-officers of the militia of the vallies of Aragoa reside.

In these vallies there are other villages to which

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I dare not here assign any particular place, for fear of offending the self-love of the cities, who would undoubtedly be hurt to see in a chapter, consecrated to cities alone, five villages, which have no other title to renown than industry. They must, however, give me leave to say, that these villages are Gagoa, San-Matteo, Mamou, (formerly Elconsejo) Escobar, and Magdalena. The first has a population of five thousand two hundred persons; the second, of two thousand eight hundred; the third, of three thousand; the fourth, of five thousand four hundred; and the fifth, of two thousand seven hundred.

In 1786, there were, in the vales of Aragoa, one hundred and eighty-six plantations; one thousand six hundred and thirty houses.

10,929	Whites.
447	Exempted Indians.
3,378	Tributary Indians.
12,159	Persons of Colour.
3,882	Slaves.
30,795	

At the time in which I write, (1804) this population amounts to near fifty thousand persons.

Coro.

Chance made Coro, after Cumana, the first establishment of the Europeans, in this eastern part of Terra Firma. Time, that places every thing in its proper station, has made it take the rank which the sterility of its soil assigns.

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Jean Ampues sent, as has been mentioned in the first chapter, by the audience of St. Domingo to Terra-Firma, to subject to law the trading Spaniard, every step of whose progress was marked with some new crime; Jean Ampues, having no point fixed for his debarkation, had no inducement to contend with the winds or the currents. He obeyed them, and they carried him to Coro. He availed himself of the good-nature of the Indians he found there in order to build at some distance from the port, a city which every thing announced must needs be happy under the wise administration of its founder. But it had the good fortune to be governed by him for only the first five years of its existence. Destiny had condemned this town to serve as the resort of the ferocious robbers, which the contract made between Charles the Fifth and the Welsers occasioned to pass into those countries.

The village of Coro had to blush, or to lament, at being, during the space of eight years, the focus of the desolators of a country then entirely in the hands of nature, and the deposit of the fruits of their crimes. The province having returned to the authority of the Spanish monarch, the city of Coro continued to be the seat of government. She enjoyed the prerogative of the capital of Venezuela until the fertility of the valleys, in the middle of which they had just erected Caraccas, determined the governor to turn his eyes from the aridity of Coro, to cast them on a country, the multitude of whose rivers, and the thickness of whose forests gave the most favourable omen of the riches it would one day afford. Jean Pimentel,

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governor of Venezuela, is the first who fixed his residence at Caraccas. This was in 1576.

From that time there remained no other public authority of consideration than the bishop and the chapter, who did all they could to follow the governor.—But, being unable to quit Coro by legal means, they accomplished it by flight, in the manner which has been mentioned under the article Caraccas.

The city of Coro is in a dry plain, sandy, and without water: nothing is seen but prickly pears nickers, and the thorny taper, infallible signs of the sterility of the earth. Three leagues from the city are hills less ungrateful, where they cultivate with success, but not in abundance, all the commodities of the country.

In general, the inhabitants of Coro are as much inclined to a sedentary and idle life as any Spaniards whomsoever. Many glory in descending from the first conquerors, and believe they cannot, without corroding this genealogical tree, water it with their sweat. This naturally indicates that there is in this city more nobility than riches, and more indolence than labour.

The little commerce that is carried on, is in mules, goats, hides, sheep-skins, cheese, &c. coming in a great measure from the interior. The town of Carora is that which furnishes the most. All these articles are shipped at Coro for the neighbouring islands. The connexion most pursued, is with Curaçao, from whence they bring back dry goods, which they secrete from the vigilance of the guards, and apply to the purpose of their corruption.

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Ten thousand persons of all colours, form the population of Coro. Few slaves are seen in this city, because from a caprice which is easier to admire than explain, the Indians, who in all other places have a peculiar affection for the blacks, at Coro have a most decided aversion to them.

This antipathy was, in 1797, even very useful to the public tranquillity. The negro slaves employed in the labours of the field wished to imitate the blacks of St. Domingo. They gave themselves chiefs, under whom they committed some acts of robbery. The Indians of Coro united themselves with the whites, and marched against the rebels with a courage of which they did not seem capable. The revolt was appeased almost as soon as begun; they hanged the most conspicuous, and the residue returned to their duty. The army of the rebels never amounted to more than four hundred blacks.

All labour is performed at Coro by the Indians, for wages calculated on local wretchedness, that is to say, very low. In truth, they live there with so much parsimony that they cannot go to ask a bit of fire from a neighbour without carrying a piece of wood of the same size as the brand they take away; and this exchange is not always exempt from difficulty.

The city has not any aqueduct. The water they drink comes half a league on asses and in barrels, two of which compose a load, and are sold for a real of eight to the hard dollar.

Heretofore the houses were well built. They cannot be now looked at without causing melancholy.

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They all bear the print of the ravages of time and misery; those of the Indians are still more pitiable. The streets, although laid out on a line, are not paved. The whole of the public edifices consecrated to religion, consist of one parish-church, in former times a cathedral, which title the inhabitants of Coro still preserve for it, though for more than a hundred and sixty years it has had neither bishop nor chapter; it is served by two priests; of one monastery where the Franciscans have from seven to eight monks; and of a parish-church that has three chapels of ease.

The civil authority is exercised by a common council. Since 1799, a military commander has been established there, who participates at the same time in the judicial authority and capital jurisdiction; his appointment is two thousand hard dollars.

The city is in 10 degrees 8 minutes north latitude, and 72 degrees 25 minutes longitude west from Paris, one league from the sea, twenty-four west of Caraccas, thirty-three north of Barquisimeto, and fifty-five from Maracaïbo.

Two leagues north of Coro is an isthmus about a league wide, which unites the peninsula of Paragoana to the continent. It stretches from south-west to north-east about twenty leagues, inhabited by Indians and a very few whites, whom a taste for pastoral life has fixed on this spot, fit only for grazing. The beasts raised there are numerous, and are, for the most part, smuggled over to Curaçao, whose stalls are almost always better provided than those of the principal cities of Terra-Firma that supplies it.

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Carora.

Thirty leagues south of Coro is the city of Carora. Its situation is indebted to nature for a salubrious air only; for it very frequently wants the water that the river Morera, on the banks of which it is situated, in dry weather refuses. Its soil, parched and covered with thorny plants, affords no other productions than those which owe almost their whole existence to the principle of heat. There is observed there a species of wild cochineal, as fine as the *mistica,* which they suffer to perish on the plant; balsams, as odoriferous as those of Arabia, and aromatic gums, specifics for wounds, and preservatives from cramps and spasms. But it is not towards these objects that either the ambition or the industry of the inhabitants of Carora is directed; they have preferred covering this ungrateful land with productive animals, such as oxen, mules, horses, sheep, goats, &c. The attention and activity they apply to make the most of these articles form their real eulogy, and lead us to believe that there are few cities in the Spanish West-Indies where there is so much industry as in Carora.

The principal inhabitants live on the produce of their flocks; others gain a livelihood by working up the raw materials they afford. The hides and skins are tanned and dressed according to their quality.—The numerous deer which they hunt continually, pay likewise to the tawer the tribute of their skins. It must, however, be confessed that these preparations have not very complete success. Self-love, always

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pardonable when accompanied with the desire of doing well, throws the blame on the bad quality of the tan, and the water they are obliged to use, but, it is certain, that ignorance of the process makes a great part. Yet the consumer has no great reproaches to cast upon the workmen, because it is impossible to conceive how they can furnish these articles, whatever may be their quality, for the moderate price at which they are sold.

The hides and skins dressed at Carora are, in a great measure, employed in the city itself in boots, shoes, saddles, bridles, and curriery. The surplus of the local consumption is spread over the province, or goes to Maracaïbo, Carthagena, and the island of Cuba. They make, also, at Carora, with a kind of fibre, *aloe disthica*, very good hammocks, which constitute an article of commerce.

All these labours occupy and maintain a population of six thousand two hundred persons, who, to a barren soil, have been able to attach the comforts nature seems to have had the intention of removing from them.

The town is tolerably well built; the streets are large and on a line; the parish-church is handsome and well kept up; it is aided by a chapel of ease, dedicated to St. Denis, the Areopagite.

The administration of justice and police is in the hands of a lieutenant-governor and the common council. The military have no authority.

Carora is in 10 degrees of north latitude, fifteen leagues east of the lake of Maracaïbo, twelve leagues

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north of Tocuyo, twenty-eight north-west of Barquisimeto, and ninety leagues west of Caraccas.

Barquisimeto.

Barquisimeto, a city more ancient by fifteen years than Caraccas, is situated in 9 degrees 45 minutes of north latitude, on a level whose elevation enables it to enjoy the coolness of every breeze. The excessive heat which is experienced there, thanks to this happy situation, becomes supportable. The thermometer of Reaumur rises to 28 and 29 degrees, whenever the rays of the sun do not meet with something in the atmosphere to temper their ardour. The most constant and most equal wind that prevails at Barquisimeto is the north-east.

In the plains, the vallies, and the rising grounds which compose its environs, the inhabitants find sufficient room to gratify their taste, and apply their industry. The plains, covered with excellent pasturage, render it easy to rear every species of marketable animal. Many of the citizens give the preference to this kind of speculation, and find it answers well. They cultivate also the sugar cane, and the very best of wheat.

The vales, from a freshness preserved by means of flooding, produce cacao abundantly, and of a good quality; and the sides of the hills have lately been employed in the culture of coffee, which, to be exquisite, requires only a more careful preparation.

In considering only the immensity of the fertile lands that may be watered, and yet remain uncultivated

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in the environs of Barquisimeto, one would be tempted to accuse the indolence of the inhabitants; but on casting the eye over the plantations of every kind of articles, and on the animals spread over the plains; on reflecting on the great difficulty of transporting its commodities to the sea-ports, the nearest and most frequented of which is at a distance of fifty leagues, one cannot refrain from pronouncing an eulogy on the citizens of Barquisimeto.

The bare aspect of the city announces the ease of eleven thousand three hundred persons who inhabit it. The houses are well built; the streets on a line and wide enough for the air to circulate freely. The parish-church is handsome and served by two priests. A Christ is to be seen there, the object of the public veneration, and the private devotion of the villages twenty leagues around. There is, also, a monastery of Franciscans, and a hospital badly attended.

A common council and lieutenant discharge the judicial duties and those of the police.

Barquisimeto is forty leagues west south-west of Caraccas, a hundred and fifty leagues north north-east of Santa Fè, and fifteen leagues of Tocuyo.

Tocuyo.

The city of Tocuyo is built in a valley formed by two mountains. Its division and construction are very regular. The streets on a line, and sufficiently wide. A house of worship, very well built, serves as the parish-church, on which depends one chapel of ease. The Franciscans have there one monastery,

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and the Dominicans another. It is governed by a common council. The sky is often overcast, and the climate rather cold than hot. The air, however, is wholesome.

The quality of its lands accommodates itself, like that of the soil of Barquisimeto, to every sort of production, and its inhabitants turn it to a still better account. They are, at the same time, graziers, agriculturists, artisans, and traders. Wheat, among the other articles the inhabitants of Tocuyo cultivate, is esteemed the best in the province, and furnishes the consumption of many towns of the interior. They estimate the flour which is annually exported from Tocuyo to Barquisimeto, Guanara, St. Philip, and Caraccas, at from eight to ten thousand quintals. They fabricate from the wool of their sheep, coverlids, and other cloths, which they send or carry as far as Maracaïbo and Carthagena. They have also tanneries, and taweries, and, like the inhabitants of Carora, work up as many as they can of the raw materials, and sell the rest.

Another species of commerce, exceedingly lucrative to the citizens of Tocuyo, is the sale of salt, which they bring from the salt ponds of Coro. Their activity maintains them in the exclusive vent of this article of the first necessity.

They reckon in the city of Tocuyo ten thousand two hundred persons, who are reproached with the phrenzy of suicide. A Creole of Tocuyo thinks nothing of cutting his throat, or hanging himself. Once dissatisfied with life, it becomes insupportable. He rids himself of it with the same composure that an

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overloaded man relieves himself of his burthen. This system of cowardice, rather than of courage; of extravagance, rather than philosophy; has, as yet, found partisans in this city alone.

Tocuyo is 90 leagues south-west of Caraccas, and 20 leagues north of Truxillo. Its latitude is 9 degrees 35 minutes, north; and its longitude 72 degrees 40 minutes, west of Paris.

Guanara.

The city of Guanara received from its founders, in 1593, the civil and religious institutions which they then gave to every village they established, that is to say, a common council and priest. Its situation is a sufficient eulogium on those who chose it. First, a river, that has given its name to the city, furnishes also excellent water to its inhabitants, floods their lands, and waters their cattle. Next, there is nothing to impede the wind from circulating freely through the town, and freshening the atmosphere.

If the situation of Guanara is considered with respect to the labours of the field, it will be seen that it has, on the western part, the most fertile lands, fit for every kind of produce, and on the southern and eastern immense plains, whose pastures are evidently destined by nature for the multiplication of cattle.—It is, therefore, to this kind of speculation that the people of Guanara are principally inclined. Their greatest riches consist in cattle, the number of which is infinite. They sell quantities of oxen for the con-

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sumption of the province, and mules for its service The surplus they export by Coro, Porto-Cavello, or Guiana. Formerly they raised very good tobacco in the valleys of Tucupio, Sipororo, and on the banks of the river Portuguese; but since the establishment of the exclusive sale of tobacco, the plantations have undergone the fate of all those which have had the misfortune to find themselves without the limits of the territory assigned by the administrators for the cultivation of tobacco on account of the king.

The population of Guanara is twelve thousand three hundred persons. The streets straight, wide, and formed by houses, which, without being sumptuous, are of a tolerable construction. There is a hospital with a very moderate revenue; but the parish church is large, handsome, and superiorly adorned. It owes a part of its splendor to the advantage which it has of possessing our lady of Comoroto, whose virtues and miracles demand that I should give some details of her vision, and the cause of the great concourse which she attracts from all the provinces bordering on Guanara.

Local tradition has been the sole depository of the circumstances relating to the appearance of our lady of Comoroto, until the 3d of January, 1746, when Dr. Don Carlos de Heréra, superior vicar of the cathedral of Caraccas, being at Guanara in the capacity of a visitor, ordered a public inquiry to verify, in a positive and irrefragable manner, the facts that tradition might suffer to escape her memory, or the exactitude of which she might impair. Behold what was the result.

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In 1651, an inhabitant, named Jean Sanchez, went from the city of Espiritu Santo, by a road which crosses the dry savannas, to that of Tocuyo. A cacique stopped him to mention that a very handsome woman had appeared to him in a ravine which he pointed out, and that she had told him to go with his family to find the whites, to have some water thrown on his head as the only means of opening the road to Heaven. Sanchez, a little pressed for time, deferred the examination of this affair till his return, which was in eight days. The cacique was punctual in going at that period to the very spot; as much affected with what the lady had told him as on the first day. The magistrates were apprized that the whole of the Cacique's nation would go to the church to receive baptism. This was punctually executed, and in less than an hour more than seven hundred souls were put into the path of salvation.

After this solemn act all the young girls and children of the baptized Indians saw the lady in the ravine where she had made her first appearance. As it was there that they went to draw water, and always stayed a much longer time than was necessary, they were often scolded and beaten by their parents. The same fault, and the same chastisement was repeated every day, until at last the children declared that a woman appeared to them under so beautiful a figure that they could not refrain from admiring her.

No grown person could see her; but on the report of the children they attributed to the waters of this ravine most prodigious virtues. What at once carried their credit to its height was, that the bishop

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Diego de Banos, having sent some of this water to Madrid in 1699, it arrived, after ten months, as fresh as if it had but just been taken out of the ravine.—The governor, Don Nicolas Eugenio de Ponce, sent, at the same time, some to his wife in the Canaries, which arrived in like manner, with all the characteristics of freshness.

They who stand in need of it, go with a lighted lamp and bathe themselves in this ravine. The water is sent every where. The very flints from this ravine are become relics, which they wear round the neck. What is remarkable is, that they all had entire faith in these miracles, excepting the very cacique who had informed Sanchez. He remained in a state of the most unconquerable obduracy.

The eighth of September, 1652, says the inquest, they were desirous of obliging the cacique to assist at some divine offices, he refused, and withdrew to his house at a distance of two leagues. He had no sooner arrived than the virgin appeared to him with a splendor which gave at midnight as much light as the sun at high noon. The cacique had scarcely seen her when he said: "*Oh madam, dost thou come here "too? Thou may'st as well return. I am no more "disposed to obey thee. It is on thy account that "I find myself in trouble. I wish to retire to the "same woods I repent to have left.*" The wife of the Indian said to her husband, "*don't insult a wo-"man; be not so bad hearted.*" He then caught up his bow and arrow and would have shot at the virgin, but she approached so close as to prevent him. He endeavoured to seize her; she disappeared, and

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darkness succeeded. In the mean time the cacique felt something in his hand, they kindled the fire, and recognized it to be a figure of the virgin, which he hid under the thatch on the roof of his cottage, and went into the woods where he died from the bite of a snake.

A child of twelve years of age found this little figure; he tied it to the bag of relics which he wore round his neck. But this event was no sooner known, than they came in procession to look for her. They immediately erected for her a temple more worthy of her dignity, where all the faithful offer up to her the continual homage of the most profound veneration. She wants nothing to rival our lady of Loretto but the riches of our Italian virgin, for she is quite as much revered, and quite as potent.

Guanara is in 8 degrees 14 minutes of north latitude, and 72 degrees 15 minutes longitude west from Paris; ninety-three leagues south-west from Caraccas, twenty-four leagues south-east from Truxillo.

Araura.

The city of Araura is one of the happy results of the labours of the first Capuchin Andalusian missionaries, who had the courage to undertake in the province of Venezuela to make them renounce, by persuasion alone, the idolatry and savage life of Indians, which till then it had been thought impossible to subdue but by force of arms. We have seen, in Chap. VI. how much the Spanish sovereignty and public tranquility is indebted to these venerable ministers of

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the God of peace. The only mode of avoiding repetitions is to refer the reader to it.

The situation of Araura is beautiful, agreeable and advantageous. Three rivers water its territory, and multiply the sources of fertility, of which, indeed, the inhabitants are very far from drawing all that is possible. Their principal, and almost only occupation is, raising of cattle. They cultivate nothing but cotton and a little coffee. If it is wished to behold a laborious people, care must be taken how the steps are directed towards Araura. The plan of the city is regular and pleasing enough. The streets are straight. They have contrived a very handsome square. The houses are well built, without there being any thing remarkable except the church, which is superb.

Our lady *de la Corteza*, or of the Bark, occupies, in the church of Araura, the first place. She enjoys the public veneration not only of all the faithful of Araura, but even that of all the villages in the neighbourhood. Her miraculous appearance was made in 1702, at a little distance from the city. The judicial inquisition taken in 1757, states, that a mulatto woman, named Margaret, going from the city of Araura to pay her devotion to our lady of Comoroto, had on her way some occasion to tie the beast she rode to a tree. When she went to untie it she perceived on the bark of the tree the image of a virgin; she raised it up with a knife and carried it away. Having arrived at the village of Acasigua, she put the little virgin in a corner of the room with a lighted candle, and began to pray to her. A Capuchin missionary came to this same house and wished to know the his-

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tory of the new virgin: the girl told the whole. Instantly the Capuchin with eagerness requested her to make him a present of the virgin. He met with some difficulties which it was impossible to remove, but by giving in exchange a bag of relics, and two impressions of the holy virgin, one of Rosaria, the other of the conception. On these conditions the barter was made. The Capuchin carried away our lady of the Bark. She was placed in the parish church of Araura, whe she has performed a number of miracles. She has not, however, either the celebrity, or the power of our lady of Comoroto.

Calaboso.

Calaboso is a city of a late date, which was at first an Indian village, but since augmented by the Spaniards, who had fixed their abode there to be nearer at hand to watch and take care of their herds. The company of Guipuscoa arrogates to itself in its memoirs the merit of having given to Galaboso the degree of increase which it must needs have acquired to be inscribed in the list of cities.

Its climate is excessively hot, although regularly tempered by the breeze from the north-east. Its soil is fit for little but to raise cattle, and it is only employed for that purpose. The pasturage is good, and its horned beasts very numerous. Yet, for some time, whether that corruption of manners has made a progress, or that the vigilance of the magistrate is relaxed, this species of property has experienced the

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alarming effects of devastation and pillage. Bands of robbers, enemies to labour, addicted to every vice, continually traverse the immense plains from the district of Calaboso to the banks of the Guarapicha, steal as many oxen and mules as they can, and introduce them clandestinely into Guiana and Trinidad. They often, as I have had occasion to observe, even kill them on the spot, only to obtain the skin and tallow. If prompt and vigorous measures are not taken, the settlements at a distance from the cities, as they almost all are, will soon be nothing more than deserts, and posterity will know only from tradition that they once held large herds.

The city of Calaboso is situated between two rivers; one, the Guarico to the west; the other, the Orituco to the east; but nearer the first than the second. These two rivers, whose courses are from north to south, unite their waters four or five leagues below Calaboso; then at the distance of about twenty leagues throw themselves into the river Apura, and go under this name to increase the Oronoko. When a quantity of rain makes these two rivers overflow their banks, a circumstance that happens annually, the inhabitants of Calaboso find themselves very much inconvenienced by the waters. Their journeys, their labours, every thing is suspended. Their animals retire to the heights, and remain there, until the water having left the plain, they can return to their pasture.

The streets and houses of Calaboso form a view agreeable enough; the church, without being handsome, is decent.

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In 1786, there were in Calaboso and the five villages dependent on it, five hundred and forty-nine houses, eleven hundred and eighty-six free Indians, not tributary, three thousand one hundred and one persons of colour, nine hundred and forty-three slaves, a hundred and sixteen plantations and settlements, eighteen hundred and seventy-two mules, twenty-six thousand five hundred and fifty-two horses, sixty-seven thousand four hundred and sixty-seven oxen and cows. At this time, 1804, the city has a population of four thousand eight hundred persons. It is situated in 8 degrees 40 minutes north latitude, fifty-two leagues south of Caraccas, and almost as much north of the Oronoko.

St John the Baptist of Pao.

This city is remarkable in having only the proprietors of cattle for its inhabitants. The pasturage is excellent, the settlements numerous, and stocked with mares, horses, mules and horned beasts. Besides the emoluments arising from their sale, still further are derived from the sale of a quantity of cheese made there.

Five thousand four hundred persons form the population of the city, which is pretty regularly constructed. The parish church is to be praised more for its neatness than for its architecture. The heat would be intolerable at St. John the Baptist of Pao if it were not tempered by the violence and frequency of the north-east wind. The place is very healthy.

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They know scarcely any other complaints than such as man is subject to on whatever part of the globe he may be.

The river Pao runs to the east of the city. Its course is from north to south. It formerly discharged itself into the lake of Valencia; but by one of those revolutions which time frequently amuses itself in effecting, this river has taken its present direction. It is successively enlarged by the waters of several other streams, with which, in its turn, it increases the river Apura, to empty itself, under that name, into the Oronoko.

The new course which the river Pao has taken, seems to be a bounty of Providence, who wished to open a direct communication between Valencia and the Oronoko through an extent of a hundred leagues. Art might with so much the more ease establish this navigation, as it would have only to deepen the bed of the Pao for the first ten or twelve leagues from its source. The advantages which commerce would derive from it are incalculable, because, in time of war especially, the province of Venezuela would preserve with Guiana, in spite of the cruisers of the enemy, every intercourse circumstances could require. It does not require a very penetrating genius to perceive that by this way, which the enemy could not impede, the most prompt assistance could be sent to Guiana, in case she should be threatened with an invasion.

The latitude of the city of Pao is 9 degrees 20 minutes north. Its distance from Caraccas, to the south-west of which it lies, is 50 leagues.

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St. Louis of Cura.

The city of St. Louis of Cura is placed in a valley formed by mountains of the most grotesque appearance. Those on the south-west are crowned by rocks, which serve to prove to man the fragility of his ephemeral existence, and the constant progress of ages. The valley is, however, fertile, and covered with some articles of produce; but the greater part of its property is in cattle.

The temperature of the city is hot and dry. Its soil, a reddish clay, and extremely muddy in rainy weather. The water is not clear, though wholesome. It has four thousand inhabitants, governed by a common council. Its church, till now very little renowned, has acquired at this time a celebrity that ages will have some trouble to destroy. She owes it to the miracles of our lady of the Valencians.

This virgin was found about thirty years ago in a ravine of that name, by an old Indian, who carried her to his hut, where he exposed her to the veneration of the faithful. The virgin, by the simple glimmering of a candle of bad tallow, and under a humble roof of straw, was as generous in miracles as if she had been beneath a gilded ceiling. The priest was no sooner informed of this event than he went to the old Indian's, and requested to have the virgin to place her in the church. The Indian had infinite difficulty in consenting to part with so precious an article, which constituted the good fortune of his life. But at last the reasons of the priest prevailed, and the

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virgin was carried in procession to the church, where she was placed in a manner more worthy of herself.

The news was quickly spread throughout the province. Votaries flocked from all parts. Alms began to shower. The virgin acquired every day fresh jewels in acknowledgment of the favours they owed her. Rewards increased the perquisites of the priest. In short, every thing took the most brilliant turn, when the jealousy or the piety of the vicar of St. Sebastian de los Reyes, dispelled this flattering prospect.

He demanded, by a suit at law, that this virgin should be restored to him, because the ravine of the Valencians, where she had been found, making a part of his parish, it was incontestable that she belonged to his church. The parson of St. Louis of Cura in defence of his property opposed reasons still stronger than those alledged to deprive him of it.—The cause grew warm. Both parties were enraged. Every means was employed to establish the right of each to the virgin.

The bishop of Caraccas, embarrased in deciding this singular question, ordered that the virgin, who had occasioned the whole dispute, should be carried to Caraccas, and deposited in the palace, where he let her sleep together with the process, till his death.

At length, in 1802, the bishop Don Francisco Ibarra, a prelate endued with every civil and religious virtue, proposed to the parson of St. Sebastian de los Reyes, who was not then the same person, to abandon the claims of his predecessor, and to consent that the virgin should be sent back to the vicar

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of St. Louis of Cura. The affair was terminated according to the ever pacific desires of the venerable prelate. The process was put an end to, discord ceased, and our lady of the Valencians returned in triumph to St. Louis of Cura, after an absence of thirty years.

The city of St. Louis of Cura is in 9 degrees 45 minutes of north latitude; 22 leagues south-west of Caraccas, and 8 leagues south-east of the lake of Valencia.

St. Sebastian de los Reyes.

The foundation of the city of St. Sebastian de los Reyes is dated towards the end of the sixteenth century. It has consequently had from its origin, a common council, and a vicar. The soil of its jurisdiction, fit for many commodities, produces very little but maize, because they plant scarcely any thing else. Its pastures feed large herds, which the inhabitants prefer to the products of the field.

This city, middlingly built, carries the marks of its antiquity. Its situation is agreeable, but it is rendered disagreeable for a place of residence by the very great heats which the continual and strong breeze from the north-east is able but faintly to temper. The water is heavy, but abundant. There is besides the parish church an insignificant hospital. They reckon in the city only three thousand five hundred persons.

St. Sebastian de los Reyes is in latitude 9 degrees 54 minutes north, 28 leagues south-quarter south-west of Caraccas.

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St. Philip.

A miserable village, which originally bore the name of Cocorota, is become, at the expence of the population of Barquisimeto, and the Spaniards from the Canaries, who have fixed their abode there, as remarkable for the activity, as the industry of its inhabitants, and is no longer known but under the name of St. Philip. The soil is of a fertility rarely met with, watered on the east by the river Yarani, and on the west by the Arva, intersected by an infinity of rivulets and ravines, and exposed alternately to violent rains and excessive heats; one beholds here the incessant renovation of every principle of fecundity. They cultivate cacao, indigo, coffee, a little cotton, and still less sugar. The richness of the soil has principally contributed to raise the city of St. Philip from its primitive obscurity, and the company of Guipuscoa has completed the work; for, having chosen this spot for the establishment of warehouses, more within the reach of the consumers in the interior, and appropriated for the reception of the commodities received in payment, it is natural, that of the great number of people which it employs a part should fix in places where they will have augmented the population in augmenting the means of subsistence.

There are at St. Philip six thousand eight hundred souls. The city is regularly built. The streets are on a line and broad. The parish church is handsome

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and well maintained. The common council regulates the police, and administers justice. The atmosphere is hot and moist; the town consequently not very healthy. Yet they assert that venereal complaints are those which most inconvenience the inhabitants.

This city is in 10 degrees 15 minutes of north latitude, fifty leagues west of Caraccas, fifteen north-west of Valencia, and seven north-west of Nirgua.

Nirgua.

The city of Nirgua, erected on account of the mines discovered in its soil, is, as has been seen, Chap. I. one of the first founded in the province of Venezuela. Its environs are fertile; but the air is unwholesome. Even the natives of the place are frequently attacked by acute disorders that terminate only in death. There have never been many whites in it; but there have been many less since the *Sambos* of Nirgua for services rendered to the royal authority have attained from the king the title, of his *faithful and loyal subjects, the Sambos of the city of Nirgua.* The whites must necessarily abandon a place where this favour, exclusively accorded to the Sambos, promised them no longer any thing but mortification and discord. In fact, the whites have insensibly withdrawn themselves. They now count no more than four or five families, who would deem themselves exceedingly happy if their colour enjoyed there the same respect as that of black or copper.

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All the offices of the common council are occupied by Sambos. There is only the lieutenant-mayor of the *justicia-mayor*, named by the governor of the province, that is white.

The city manifests every symptom of decline. The houses are almost all in ruins from age, without one of its ravages being repaired by the hand of man.—Its population is three thousand two hundred persons.

But I owe to my reader some idea of the Sambo, which I ought, perhaps, to have given him before. The Sambo is the offspring of a negro man with an Indian woman, or of an Indian man with a negro woman. His colour is nearly that of a grif or cobb, the produce of a mulatto and negro. The Sambo is well formed, muscular, and able to endure fatigue; but, all his tastes, all his inclinations, all his faculties, are turned to vice. The mere name of Sambo signifies in the country a good for nothing idler, drunkard, cheat, thief, and even an assassin. Of ten crimes that are committed eight always appertain to this cursed class of Sambos. Immorality is their characteristic. It is not perceived in the same degree, either in negroes, mulattoes, or any other race, pure or mixed. A phenomenon which struck me is, that the children of a white man with an Indian woman, whose colour is a pale white, are all delicate, agreeable, good, docile; and so far from age destroying these qualities, it, on the contrary, only renders them more striking.

The city of Nirgua, is in 10 degrees of north latitude, 71 degrees 10 minutes of longitude west, and forty-eight leagues from Caraccas.

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San Carlos.

It is to the first missionaries of Venezuela, that the city of San Carlos owes its existence, and to the activity of its inhabitants, its growth and beauty. The major part of its white population is composed of Spaniards from the Canaries; and as they remove themselves from their natal soil only to meliorate their lot, they arrive with good dispositions to labour, and courage to undertake whatever may be necessary to accomplish their end. Their example establishes a species of emulation, that communicates itself even to the Creoles, and from which the public prosperity cannot but find its advantage. It is at least, the only reason which reflection has furnished me, of the ease that reigns at *San Carlos*. Live stock form the grand mass of the riches of its inhabitants. Cattle, horses, mules, are in great abundance. Cultivation, without being well pursued, is not neglected. Indigo and coffee are almost the only articles raised. The quality of the soil gives an exquisite flavour to the fruits, and particularly to the oranges, which are celebrated throughout the whole province.

The city is large, handsome and well divided.—They reckon nine thousand five hundred inhabitants. The parish church in its construction and neatness, corresponds with the industrious activity and piety of its parishioners.

The heat experienced at San Carlos is very great. It would be excessive if the violence of the north-east wind did not diminish the intenseness of the sun.—

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San Carlos is in 9 degrees 20 minutes of north latitude; 60 degrees south-west of Caraccas, twenty-eight leagues south south-west of Valencia, and twenty leagues from St. Philip.

Government of Cumana.

The government of Cumana is composed of two provinces; one properly called Cumana, and the other Barcelona. It is not well known how Barcelona with its dependencies has been able to obtain the character of a province, having never had particular governors. Since it has been conquered from the Indians it has constantly made a part of the government of Cumana. I subjoin the explanation which my researches have placed within my power to give.

That which is at this day called the province of Barcelona made a part of the province of Venezuela, and was found consequently to be comprized within the grant made in 1528 to the Welsers; but, their views, always directed towards the south, did not permit them to turn their attention to the eastern parts of the province. It was even a long period after the privilege was revoked before the Spanish governors could occupy themselves with conquering the territory of Barcelona.

The first expedition, composed of one hundred Spaniards and four hundred Indians, was entrusted, in 1579, by the governor Pimentel, to Garci Gonzales. It was originally destined for the conquest of the

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Quiriquires Indians on the borders of the Tuy. The ravages which the Cumanagotos committed more to the east determined him to commence by reducing them. Their number, courage, ferocity, and the advantage of their position, placed victory on the side of the Indians. The Spaniards were beaten, driven back, and pursued; nothing was wanting to their defeat. This enterprise, beset with difficulties and dangers, was no longer coveted by any one. They were obliged to impose it as a punishment on Christopher Cobos, condemned by the audience of St. Domingo, to aid at his own expence, in the subjugation of Venezuela, as an expiation for the crime which his father, governor of Cumana, had committed on the person of Francis Faxardo, whom he had, from jealousy, caused to be strangled in a prison, as has been already mentioned in Chap. I.

Christopher Cobos obtained from the governor, Roxas, for a conquest that demanded a considerable force, only one hundred and seventy Spaniards, and three hundred Indians from the coast. In the month of March, 1685, he entered into the territories of the Cumanagotos, who, elated with their former success, gave him frequent battles, in which his valour and intrepidity were put to full trial. Yet, by dint of engagements and victories, he remained sufficiently master of the country to found on the banks of the river Salee, and at a little distance from its mouth, a city to which he gave the name of his Saint

As soon as he saw himself in possession of a country of which he had himself believed the conquest impossible with such feeble means, he thought of re-

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venging himself on the governor Roxas. He had various conferences with the governor of Cumana, Rodrigo Nunez Lobo, from whence resulted the union of the conquest of Cobos to the government of Cumana. The natural indolence of Roxas put the seal to this arrangement, in giving to the governor of Cumana time to render an account of it to the king, and to receive his approbation of the measure, which was the more certain as it could be of very little importance to the mother country whether this part should belong to the government of Cumana, or to that of Venezuela. It is thus that the limits of Venezuela, which till then were at Maracapana, were carried to the river Unara, where they at this day still are. It is presumable, that the government of Cumana at first gave to its new acquisition the title of the province of Cumanagotos, which it relinquished to take the name of Barcelona as soon as that city became its capital.

The government of Cumana is bounded on the north and to the east by the sea, on the west by the river Unara, on the south by the river Oronoko, except on those parts where the left bank of this river is inhabited. The jurisdiction of the governor of Guiana extends to within cannon shot of the establishments situated to the north of the Oronoko.

From the river Unara to the city of Cumana the land is tolerably fertile. From the point of Araya, for twenty to twenty-eight leagues more to the east, the coast is dry, sandy, and ungrateful. The soil offers to man nothing but an inexhaustible mine of salt, at once marine and mineral. The country which

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borders on the Oronoko is good only for raising cattle, and it is to that use they apply it. It is there that all the commons of the province are situated.

The residue is every where of a wonderful fertility. The plains, the valleys, the hill sides announce by their verdure and kind of productions, that nature has there placed the most active principles of germination. But the inheritance is so little disputed with the beasts of the field, that by an inexplicable singularity neither tigers, panthers, nor even apes, have any dread of man. The most precious trees, the guiacum, anacardium, brazil, and campeachy wood, are found down to the very coast of Paria itself.—The air is peopled with birds the most rare and charming.

The interior of the government of Cumana is occupied by mountains, some of which are of an extraordinary elevation. The highest, that of Tumeriquiri, is nine hundred and thirty-five toises above the level of the sea.

In this mountain is the cavern of Guacharo, famous among the Indians. It is immense, and serves as a habitation for millions of nocturnal birds (a new species of the *caprimulgus* of Linnæus) whose fat yields the oil of Guacoaro. Its site is majestic, and adorned by the most brilliant vegetation. There issues from the cavern a river of some magnitude, and within is heard the mournful cry of the birds, which the Indians attribute to the souls that are forced to enter this cavern in order to go to the other world. But they are enabled to obtain permission for it only when their conduct in this life has been without reproach.

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If it has been otherwise, they are retained for a shorter or longer time, according to the heinousness of their offences. This dark, wretched, mournful abode draws from them the mournings and plaintive cries heard without.

The Indians have so little doubt of this fable, supported by tradition, being a sacred truth commanding the utmost respect, that immediately after the death of their parents or friends they repair to the mouth of the cavern to ascertain whether their souls have met with any impediment. If they think they have not distinguished the voice of the deceased, they withdraw overjoyed, and celebrate the event by inebriety and dances characteristic of their felicity; but if they imagine they have heard the voice of the defunct, they hasten to drown their grief in intoxicating liquors, in the midst of dances, adapted from their nature, to paint their despair.

So, whatever may be the lot of the departed soul, his relations and friends give themselves up to the same excesses; there is no difference, but in the character of the dance.

All the Indians of the government of Cumana and Oronoko not converted to the faith, and even many of those who appear to be so, have notwithstanding as much respect for this opinion as their ancestors could possibly have had. It appears that it is not, like so many others of its kind, the child of imposture or fanaticism; for it is not accompanied with any religious ceremony, the expence of which would increase the revenue of the inventor's benefice. The cavern itself shows no vestige of superstition

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having at any time obtained there the least monument of the empire imposture might have wished to exercise over credulity. This prejudice then is solely the effect of fear, ever ingenious in creating phantoms, and in imagining those things which flatter the illusion. Among the Indians two hundred leagues from the cavern *to go down into Guacharo,* is synonimous with *to die.*

Mr. Humboldt has informed us, that in the mountains of the government of Cumana, especially in those of Tumeriqueri, there is a layer about three toises thick of limestone and argillaceous earth mixed with a great portion of coal. Upon this stratum is often found one of sandy earth, which appears modern. It is a mass of shells, quartz, and secondary limestone. Respecting the formation of this sandy earth it is easy to be deceived; for at thirty toises deep these strata appear to be of pure limestone; but on examining them attentively, quartz is discovered in the mass, then the limestone base disappears by degrees, till the quartz increases so much, that hardly any thing else can be perceived.

The principal establishments of the dependencies of Cumana are on the western coast, as Barcelona, Piritu, Clarinas, &c. Twelve leagues to the southwest of Cumana is the Valley of Cumanacoa, where the plantations of tobacco on account of the king are situated. The soil is so congenial to this species of production, that the tobacco cultivated there obtains in the country a marked preference over that raised in every other part of Terra-Firma. Connoisseurs

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pay willingly for the segars of the tobacco of Cumanacoa double the amount given for those made of tobacco from any other quarter. In the environs of Cumanacoa are the Indian villages of San-Fernando, Arenas, and Aricagua, situated in a territory of extreme but useless fertility. More in the interior are found the Valleys of Carepa, Guanaguana, Cocoyar, &c. very fertile, but uncultivated.

The part which seems to have a disposition to revive is the coast of the gulf of Paria, from the place where the Guarapicha disembogues to the most northern mouth of the Oronoko. We there see two villages yet rising, Guiria and Guinima, inhabited by Spaniards and French refugees from Trinidad, since the English possessed themselves of it in 1797. The progress which cultivation has made in this short interval induces a presumption that this district will in a few years become the richest in the province. It is true that the neighbourhood held by the British, offers to the cultivator on the coast of Paria encouragements which he finds in no other part. He there procures himself at a cheap rate, and often on credit, all the iron-work necessary for his establishments, and he there sells, in a moment, all his commodities without duties, and with hardly any expence of transportation, at prices far superior to those he could gain in the Spanish ports. Will the government determine to tolerate this clandestine intercourse, which, in fact, can be considered as only a trifling inconvenience, in comparison to the advantages which it secures to the province, or will it adopt measures to prevent it? It is a problem which wisdom ought to

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solve. But it seems to me that good policy advises to take no notice of it till the plantations on the borders of the gulf of Paria shall be considerable enough to draw to them the commerce of the mother country.

The whole territory of the government of Cumana, is intersected in every direction by rivulets, brooks, and rivers equally applicable to the purposes of flooding as to those of hydraulic machines and navigation. I have already said, that the rivers which discharge themselves into the sea to the north are the Neveri and Mansanaries, both of small size and gentle current; and that those which disembogue to the east and in the gulf of Paria traverse a greater extent of country. Some throw themselves into the Guarapicha, which is itself navigable at twenty-five leagues from the sea. These rivers are the Colorado, the Guatatar, the Caripa, the Punceres, the Tiger, the Guayuata, &c. others have their course to the south, and, after having watered the province, empty themselves into the Oronoko.

The productions of the government of Cumana might then be shipped, as may be convenient, to the north by Barcelona and Cumana; to the east by the gulf of Paria; and to the south by the Oronoko. It would be difficult for nature to do more than she has done for this part of the world, which ought, for its present situation to accuse the indolence of man, not the care of providence. But what progress can she promise herself with a population of twenty-four thousand persons, of all ages, of all colours, and of both sexes, scattered over an extent of such magni-

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tude? They even reckon in this number the Indians of the mission of the Arragonese Capuchins, whose reduction is still uncertain, and whose labours are an absolute nullity. These missions, which they call *chaymes*, are spread through the mountains where a number of savage Indians exercise the zeal and patience of missionaries.

A million of cultivators in the province of Cumana, would give to Spain as much produce as she draws from all her other possessions; for there is not a country that unites in the same degree as Cumana does, richness of soil to the benefits of flooding, the convenience of transporting its commodities, and the advantages of situation to windward of all Terra-Firma.

Cumana.

The city of Cumana, the most ancient of all Terra-Firma, was built, as has already been said, in 1520, by Gonzalo Ocampo, near a quarter of a league from the sea, on a sandy and dry soil.

It is in 10 degrees 37 minutes, 37 seconds of north latitude, and 66 degrees 30 minutes longitude west from Paris. The thermometer of Reaumur, rises generally in July, to 23 degrees in the day, and to 19 in the night.

The maximum - - -	27
The minimum - - -	17

The elevation of the city above the level of the sea is fifty-three feet. In July, the hygrometer of Duluc, generally indicates 50 to 53 degrees of humidity,

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The maximum	66
The minimum	46

According to the cyanometer of Saussure, there are 24 degrees of the blue of the sky, whilst at Caracas there are but 18, and in Europe generally 14.

The seat of government of the two provinces of which it is composed is at Cumana. The governor, appointed for five years, is at the same time *vice-patron*, and, in this capacity, nominates to all the vacant benefices, and fills up all those offices of religious worship, whose appointments constitute a part of the royal prerogatives. As sub-delegate of the intendant, he has the administration of the finances of his department, he superintends the receipt of the taxes, removes doubts, directs the ordinary expences, and receives the accounts of the officers of the administration; but he is subordinate to the captain-general as to all political relations with foreign colonies, and whatever concerns the military department. He is, also, in the management of the finances, and commercial regulations, under the orders of the intendant.

Yet a governor of Cumana, Don Vicente Emparan, a native of Biscay, took upon himself, during the war from 1793 to 1801, to admit neutral vessels into the ports of his government, though he had orders to exclude them. By this happy resistance abundance reigned within his jurisdiction during a time in which the whole residue of Terra-Firma was in want of every thing, except dry goods furnished by the English colonies. There is this besides, that the very war which respect for the prohibitive laws would

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have rendered destructive to the provinces of Cumana and Barcelona, became, on the contrary, the occasion and means of a growth, that will there for ever cause to be blessed the name of the governor who had the courage to expose himself to the reproaches of his king for the sake of the welfare of the country entrusted to his care. But his Catholic Majesty, always just in his decisions, instead of blaming the conduct of the governor Emparan, bestowed on him the highest commendations. In the month of April, 1804, he obtained permission to retire with the whole of his appointments of governor of Cumana, and was replaced by a brigadier of the king's troops, Don Juan Manuel de Cagigal. I have sufficiently known and followed him during his exercise of the office of king's lieutenant at Caraccas to be able to prognosticate that the inhabitants of the province of Cumana will have reason to applaud this choice.

To the north of the city of Cumana is the gulf of Cariaco, which I have slightly described in the chapter of chorography. The church of Divina-Pastora is the nearest public building to it.

The river Mansanares, which separates on the south the city from the suburbs occupied by the Guayqueris Indians, encompasses the city on the south and west. The water of this river is the only water drank by the inhabitants of Cumana. It has often the disadvantage of not being clear, but is seldom unwholesome.

Cumana enjoys a healthy air, though scarcely ever cool. To reside there one must be resigned to suffer continual heat. Yet the sea breeze is tolerably re-

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gular, and moderates, during a great part of the day, the fervour of the sun, although it is obliged, in order to arrive there, to surmount a hill, that lies on the back of the town, and extends itself along the whole of the eastern side of the city. A fort, placed on this hill, constitutes the whole defence of Cumana, which itself is garrisoned by only two hundred and thirty regulars, and one company of artillery.

Religious worship has at Cumana no more than a single parish church, situated to the south-east of the city, near a fort that they have demolished. The order of St. Dominick has but one monastery, and that of St. Francis another. Both have a long time felt the misery of the country. They now enjoy, by means of charity, the happy results of the encouragement agriculture has for the last twelve years received in this province.

The number of inhabitants in Cumana of every age and colour is twenty-four thousand. It is now four times as large as it was fifty years ago. It increases with so much the more rapidity, as the ancient scite of the town affording no further convenient room for new houses, they have been obliged for some short time back to build on the left bank of the river Mansanares, to the west of the village of the Guayqueris. These new houses are already sufficiently numerous to form a village which communicates with the city by a bridge; and the inhabitants, in 1803, erected a church for the more convenient discharge of the duties of religion. The first street that was laid out bears the name of Emparan. It is a tribute which the inhabitants of Cumana pay

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to the governor, who did every thing that he was able for their prosperity.

All the houses of Cumana are low and slightly built. The frequent earthquakes they have experienced for these ten years have compelled them to sacrifice beauty and elegance to personal safety.—The violent shocks felt in the month of December, 1797, threw down almost all the edifices of stone, and rendered uninhabitable those which were left standing. The earthquake of November, 1799, caused a variation in the needle of 45 degrees.

According to the judicious observations of Mr. Humboldt, Cumana is exposed to earthquakes from its proximity to the gulf of Cariaco, as it appears to have some communication with the volcanos of Cumucuta, which throw out hydrogen gas, sulphur, and hot sulphureous water. It is observed that the earthquakes take place only after rains, and that the caverns of Cuchivano at those periods emit during the night inflammable gas, which is seen to shine for the height of a hundred toises. It is probable that the decomposition of the water in burning marl that is full of pyrites, and which contains hydrogen particles, is one of the principal causes of this phenomenon. See the article *Earthquake*, in Chap. II.

The population of Cumana is in a great measure composed of white Creoles, among whom very considerable natural abilities are remarked. They are exceedingly attached to the soil that gave them birth. They generally apply themselves solely to that species of occupation which their birth or fortune has assigned them. Agriculture occupies some; com-

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merce, navigation, the fisheries, furnish subsistence to a number of others. The number of fish taken in the latitudes of Cumana allow of salting an astonishing quantity, and of making large shipments to Caraccas, and the other cities of these provinces, and to export also to the Windward-Islands, from whence they bring back in return iron implements of husbandry, provisions, and contraband goods. The cargoes are always of very little value. They are contented with moderate profits, which they increase by multiplying their voyages. From funds of four or five thousand hard dollars, which in other places would appear insufficient for any commercial enterprize, five or six families in Cumana can derive a maintenance. Activity and assiduity constitute the source, from whence the ease which reigns there proceeds.

The Creoles who enter into the career of letters, distinguish themselves by their penetration, judgment, and application. There is not seen exactly the same vivacity of spirit that is perceived in the Creoles of Maracaïbo, but those of Cumana are compensated by a larger portion of good sense and solidity.

The retail trade and chandlery are carried on by some Catalonians, and a few from the Canary Islands.

Amidst the productions which Cumana adds to commerce, cacao nuts, and the oil extracted from them, deserve to be mentioned. Medicinal plants might also figure among the commercial articles, if the inhabitants had an exact knowledge of them, and were not ignorant of the manner in which they ought

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to be prepared. There is found in abundance in the environs of Cumana, a species of bark, called by the Spaniards *tupsa*. The *calaguala*, a plant, the root of which is a great dissolvent, aperiative, and sudorific; the *pissipini*, a sort of emetic; the *caranapiri*, a species of sage; the *tuatua*, a purgative more powerful than jalap. There are also a variety of aromatics, which perish on the same spot where nature has produced them. (See for the residue, the Chapter *Commerce*, to learn what Cumana carries on, and under what kind of regulation.)

Names of the Merchants of Cumana.

Berrisbeytia. (Don Mauricio.)
Coll. (Don Augustin.)
Jotosans. (Don Joseph.)
Lerma. (Don Joseph.)

Cumanacoa.

Cumanacoa, although the Spaniards sound the penultima long, is a Basque, or Biscayan word, signifying *what is from Cumana;* without doubt, because the germ of the city of this name was drawn from the city of Cumana, and because some of these emigrants were Biscayans. It is situated fourteen leagues south-east of Cumana, in the middle of a valley of the same name; its population is four thousand two hundred persons; the air is wholesome, and the waters possess a diuretic quality that is not often met with. It wants only hands to enrich itself from the produc-

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tions which the goodness of the land would yield if it was cultivated. The fruits have a flavour, a taste, and a firmness, which they possess but in few other places. The government gives to this city the name of *San Baltasar de los Arias;* but that of Cumanacoa has so prevailed that it is known by no other appellation.

Cariaco.

This city, placed on the river of the same name; bears in the official papers and tribunals that of *San Philippo de Austria.* It has a population of only six thousand five hundred persons, but every one employs his time so well as to banish poverty from it.—The production the most congenial to its soil is cotton, the beauty of which surpasses that of all the cotton of *Terra-Firma.* This spot alone furnishes annually more than three thousand quintals. They raise also a little cacao, and a small quantity of sugar.

New Barcelona.

This city, founded in 1634, by Don Juan Urpin, is situated in a plain on the left bank of the river Neveri, and at a league from its mouth. It has a population of fourteen thousand souls, a single parish church, and a hospital for the Franciscans, who support the missions of this part. It is neither handsomely nor agreeably constructed. Its unpaved streets are extremely muddy in rainy weather, and, in dry seasons covered with a dust so light that the least breath raises it in the air. The immense quantity of hogs

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fed there induce in the city a number of stinking and infectious sties that corrupt the air, and frequently create diseases. The common council, whose principal duty it is to watch over the health of the inhabitants, apathetically leave it exposed to all the malignity of those pestilential miasmata, in the dangers of which it partakes itself. But I have learnt, that towards the close of the year 1803, the commandant of the place, Mr. Cagigal, took very sensible measures for removing from the town an infection that cannot but poison its residence.

The city of Barcelona was originally peopled from the inhabitants of St. Christopher of Cumanagoto, to which it has been in some degree, substituted.

Cultivation is exceedingly neglected at Barcelona and its environs. The valleys best cultivated are those of Capirimal and Brigantin. There are others equally fertile which remain totally neglected, and altogether do not yield above three thousand quintals of cacao, and some little cotton. This part is almost without slaves; they reckon but two thousand on an extent of surface that would employ two hundred thousand; and the moiety of even these two thousand are occupied in domestic services.

The excellent pasturage that covers the immense plains dependent on Barcelona, naturally induced the inhabitants to prefer open fields and common lands in which they for a long time found their account.—Besides the horned cattle they sold for the consumption of the country or for exportation, they killed a prodigious quantity, the meat of which they salted, and was always sold in the neighbouring islands and

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at the Havanna at a hundred per cent profit. The tallow and hides formed also a very important object of commerce. This resource is at the present day, without being totally destroyed, very much diminished. The robbers who, since 1801, with impunity despoil the commons, have reduced these provinces to such a want of cattle that they can scarce obtain enough for butcher's meat. I have already spoken of these disorders, as well in the chapter on *Commerce* as under the article of *Calaboso*, in the present chapter.

The population of Barcelona is half of whites, half of persons of colour. The last are here as useless to agriculture as every where else. Among the whites, there is a portion of Catalonians, who are exclusively engaged in commerce; their speculations are directed as well to prohibited as permitted articles. Their frequent expeditions to Trinidad are composed on their return of nothing but contraband goods, of which Barcelona becomes the *entrepot*, from whence they are afterwards, either by land or by sea, distributed through the other provinces. They estimate at four hundred thousand hard dollars the specie annually exported from Barcelona for this clandestine commerce.

Names of the Merchants of Barcelona.

Goyheneche. (Don Martin)
Hardindeguy. (Don Pedro-Joseph)
Macia. (Don Juan-de-Dios)
Salavary. (Don Martin)
Simonovis. (Don Geronimo)

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Barcelona is in 10 degrees 10 minutes of north latitude, ten leagues by sea from Cumana, but the roads are so bad that by land it is reckoned twenty.

Conception del Pao.

The inhabitants of Trinidad, Margaretta, and Caraccas, proprietors of commons in the plains in the vicinity of the Oronoko, to the south of Barcelona, fixed successively their abodes in the centre of their properties, in order to be more at hand to superintend them. The number of houses were found in 1744, so considerable as to honour this hamlet with the title of village. They do not reckon, however, more than two thousand three hundred persons of all descriptions, whom the fertility of the soil enables to live in ease. They here enjoy good air, and drink good water; there are no other inconveniences than excessive heat, and the inundations occasioned by the long and heavy rains. Cultivation is here reduced to the provisions of the country. The riches of the inhabitants consist entirely in animals, which they export by the Guarapicha or by the Oronoko to Trinidad.

This village, become a town, is distinguished from St. John the Baptist of Pao, situated in the province of Venezuela, by the title of *Conception of Pao*. Alcedo, author of the Dictionary of America, reproaches the geographer, Don Juan de la Cruz, with having placed the city of Pao, to the south of Valencia, as if there was but one single city of this name. This proves that the geographer knew nothing of La Conception

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del Pao, and that Alcedo was ignorant of the existence of Pao of Venezuela.

The city of Conception del Pao is situated 45 leagues from Barcelona; 55 from Cumana; and near 28 leagues south-east of Caraccas.

Government of the Isle of Margaretta.

The island of Margaretta, situated in 10 degrees 56 minutes of north latitude, and between 66 and 67 degrees of longitude west from the meridian of Paris, is famous for its fishery for pearls, from whence it has received its name. It is to the south of Terra Firma, and is separated from it only by an arm of the sea eight leagues wide. It was discovered by Columbus in 1498, and the right of soil ceded by Charles V. in 1524, to Marceau Villalobos. It insensibly was peopled sufficiently to excite the envy of the Dutch, who in 1662 burnt the town, and destroyed the fort built for its defence. So fatal a blow could not fail of checking its prosperity. The nature of its soil had condemned it to be for ever only a languishing establishment. Instead of vegetative earth, it is covered with a sandy surface near a foot in thickness, mixed with hollow and rotten madrepores. Cultivation holds out no hopes. The whole of what is there is confined to a few plants of cotton, and some sugar canes that do not produce enough for even the consumption of the island. But from its situation it may well excite the envy of every commercial and maritime power, because, separated from Terra Firma by a distance of only eight leagues, and to windward

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of all her provinces, it might become, under a system of free commerce, the general *entrepot* of Cumana, Barcelona, Caraccas, Guayra, and all the cities of the interior. The island of Trinidad, much less favourably situated for the accomplishment of this object, gives, notwithstanding, to the Spanish contraband trade, all the aid it requires, and disposes, by this means, of an inconceivable quantity of merchandize. It would have no other vent than that of Guiana, if all the eastern part of Terra Firma found, in the island of Margaretta, at hand, and without the expence of navigation, what it is now obliged to buy at a greater distance.

To the advantages which the island of Margaretta presents it unites others not less important. We have observed that it serves to form the channel that separates it from Terra Firma. This channel is not even navigable for the whole eight leagues of its width. The island of Coche, situated in the middle, leaves the navigator a very narrow passage two leagues from Margaretta, through which he must indispensably pass. Every vessel coming from windward, or from Europe to Cumana, to Barcelona, and even to Guayra, is obliged to run down the south side of Margaretta. Were this island in the power of the enemies of Spain all the commerce with Europe, all intercourse with the neighbouring islands would be so much the easier intercepted, as those which endeavoured to avoid the channel would be taken by privateers, to whom Margaretta would serve as an arsenal. An enterprising enemy would find also, in the situation of Margaretta, means of easily directing

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his expeditions against any part of Terra Firma he might wish to invade.

For every reason already pointed out in Chapter V. article "*Armed Force*," Spain ought to hold Margaretta, not on account of the direct advantages she might hope from it, but from the disadvantages it would occasion her by passing under another sovereignty. It is here that we behold the cause which has erected this island into a separate government, and which, in time of war, adopts all possible measures to repel every aggression.

Throughout the whole coast of Margaretta there are but three ports. The first and principal one is Pampatar, to the east south-east; the second, called Pueblo de la Mar, is one league to leeward of the preceding; the third is on the north side, and therefore called *Pueblo del Norte*, the village of the north. At each of these ports there is a village, the most important of which is Pampatar. It is there that all the fortifications deemed requisite for the defence of the island are placed.

The capital city is Assumption; built almost in the centre of the island. There are three other villages which bear the names of the vallies where they are situated; that is to say, the Vallies of St. John; of Margaretta; and *de los Robles*, or of Oaks. The whole population of the island is fourteen thousand persons, divided into five thousand five hundred whites; two thousand Indians; and six thousand five hundred slaves and freed persons. Cultivation being there almost nothing, we cannot speak of the industry of the inhabitants. Their principal riches are in the

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pearl fisheries established in the island of Coche, in the middle of the channel. They are carried on by the Indians of Margaretta, who are obliged to transport themselves there and work in the fishery during three months of the year at the moderate wages of one real each per day, and bread of Indian meal for their only support. Five individuals of Margaretta were charged in 1803 with these fisheries, which afford also a number of turtles, and an immense quantity of fish, which they salt, and sell throughout the continent and neighbouring islands.

They fabricate at Margaretta those hammocks of cotton whose web is so much superior to the hammocks manufactured in any other place. They also make cotton stockings of extreme fineness, but too dear to be any thing more than objects of luxury and whim. The island possesses so many parrots and other curious birds, that not a vessel leaves the ports of Margaretta without having a little cargo on board. The poultry raised there becomes also a resource for the poor, who sell their fowls and turkies to the foreign islands.

The vigilance against smuggling being less active at Margaretta than elsewhere, they are enabled to carry it on with greater facility; but they avail themselves of this advantage in hardly any thing but mules, which they import from Terra Firma on their own account, and as if for their own use, though they afterwards clandestinely export them to foreign settlements.

The island contains no other commercial house of consequence than that of Mancyro, brothers. It was

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in 1804, under the direction of the eldest, Don Francisco Mancyro.

Government of Maracaïbo.

Maracaïbo, founded by the orders of the governors of Venezuela, remained a long time under their jurisdiction. Then a new division of governors fixed one at Merida, on whom Maracaïbo depended. At length Maracaïbo became the capital, and gave to its district the title of Province.

This government covers a very little extent from east to west, but it stretches more than a hundred leagues towards the south, where it is bounded by the kingdom of Santa Fè. The government of Rio de la Hache, dependent on the government of Grenada, bounds it on the west; the sea on the north; and the province of Venezuela, according to its new circumscription, on the east.

The soil of the province of Maracaïbo is for a certain distance from the capital, ungrateful. All the eastern bank of the lake is dry, unhealthy, and covered with prickly pears, nickers, pope's heads, and the thorny taper, where productions for commerce can never be raised, nor man be able to maintain himself. On the west bank, the land does not begin to be fertile but at more than twenty-five leagues to the south of the city. All that lies to the south of the lake may contend with the best lands of South America. There wants, as in so many other parts, only hands to render this province flourishing, and

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to furnish for annual exportation as many articles, as two thousand vessels of three hundred tons each could load.

Maracaïbo.

The city of Maracaïbo is situated on the left bank of the lake of the same name, at six leagues from the sea. Its location is sandy, and without the least spot of vegetative earth.

Its climate is so much the more hot as the breezes there are faint, and far from regular, as the soil is not watered by any kind of running stream, and rain is not frequent. The heats are excessive, particularly from the month of March to October; but the months of August and July are insupportable. The air breathed at this period appears as if it had issued from a furnace. The only means of preventing the effects of this calcinating atmosphere is to bathe in the lake. It is in bathing in these waters that the inhabitants of Maracaïbo temper the ardor and acrimony of their blood, inflamed by the action of the sun.

In spite of the extreme and almost continual heat experienced at Maracaïbo, it is a healthy residence. There are no epidemic complaints. A man once seasoned to the climate preserves his health as well, and better than in many other places, where the heats are less intense, and the means of refreshing himself more multiplied.

The trade winds blow there in general from the commencement of March till June or July. The

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months of August and September are calm, unless when they are interrupted by the south wind, which they denominate in the country, on account of its insalubrity, the destroyer*. They remark that when the breezes are moderate, the year is rainy; when violent, that they are succeeded by droughts. Maracaïbo is subject to dreadful tempests. The thunder breaks with the most frightful explosion; the lightning frequently strikes and consumes houses, ships, and every thing by which it is attracted or that it meets. They do not however experience those furious hurricanes which every year seem to threaten the very existence of the Antilles. All terrifying and all destructive as these tempests may be, one is there reduced to the necessity of wishing for them, because, when they fail, they are replaced by earthquakes, which are still more dreaded. The deluges of rain some of these tempests produce are so excessive, that they form a torrent which traverses the city of Maracaïbo, with a rapidity that is inconceivable, bearing trees along with it, and causing, in proportion to its rise, desolation to houses and every thing it finds in its course. Happily, these sorts of disasters are never of long duration.

The principal part of the city is on the shore of a small gulf, one league in depth, which forms the lake towards the west. The other part is to the north, in the celebrated neck of the lake which at this place is three leagues wide, from whence it begins to extend itself towards the south. They call Maracaïbo Point that where the city begins; that where the gulf com-

* *Virason*, literally *the arrow*.

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mences, Point Arieta, situated almost opposite Point St. Lucia.

There are at Maracaïbo many houses built of lime and sand, and with a great deal of taste; but whatever measures the government may take, however abundant building-wood may be, however cheap tiles, however frequent conflagrations, which often consume whole streets, more than two-thirds of the inhabitants constantly adhere most obstinately to the opinion that tiles render the houses destructive to the persons who inhabit them, and continue in the custom of covering the handsomest houses with a kind of reed, that grows on the borders of the lake, called by the Spaniards, *enea*. This mixture of houses covered with tiles and with reeds, gives to the city the air of a village, is disagreeable to the eye, and offers to the voracity of the flames, food that keeps the city in constant danger.

Some give even a greater latitude to this idea, and with the means of building houses capable of adorning the city, they construct them, on the contrary, entirely of reeds, thatch, &c. Of this last kind there are even more than those of which I have already spoken.

As there are neither fountains, nor wells, nor river, they drink no other water than that of the lake, which in taste is not agreeable, but in quality, by no means bad, except in the strong breezes of the months of March and April. They drive up the water of the sea against the current, and render that of the lake so brackish as not to be drinkable. The poor can in this case quench their thirst only with water which they procure by making excavations in the earth; but this

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is badly tasted, and very far from wholesome. They avoid this inconvenience by cisterns they have in their houses to collect the rain water. Those not quite so affluent, have large jars destined for the same purpose.

They reckon in Maracaïbo, according to the returns made in 1801, twenty-two thousand inhabitants; but the Spaniards, who at that epoch arrived from the Spanish part of St. Domingo, from whence the government of the Negro, Toussaint, had made them fly, raised the population of Maracaïbo to twenty-four thousand persons, divided into four classes: the nobility, white planters, slaves, and freedmen.

The noble families are those who boast of having descended from the first conquerors of the province, or from some governors, or judge advocates*, married in the country, or even from any other officer; for the commission, for any office whatsoever, given by the king, is, in Spanish America, an authentic title of nobility. They reckon more than thirty of these families. It is mournful to observe that they all appear to have been forsaken by fortune; the property which they did possess has, under legal process, disappeared, or has been destroyed by the Motilonian Indians before their reduction. There are very few of these primitive houses that now enjoy even an easy mediocrity. In almost all, they experience so much misery, that the idea of the illustrious origin of their family is the most grateful support

*Auditeurs de guerre; in Geneva, auditeur is synonimous almost to a sheriff. In France, they were a kind of justice of the peace, with a final jurisdiction over causes not exceeding 25 livres.

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with which they are fed; for a Spaniard, once reduced to indigence, is so for life. The shame of labour and love of indolence, makes him brave like a hero all the horrors of want.

The whites not noble are Europeans or Creoles. This is the class that lives with the greatest comfort, because it is the only one that labours, and applies itself to agriculture, navigation, commerce, the fisheries, &c.

The slaves are few; of this, the non-introduction of negroes into the province is the principal, not to say the only cause. They calculate that their number at Maracaïbo does not exceed five thousand.

The freed persons there are by no means numerous; they exercise all kinds of trades: joiners, tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, masons, and smiths.

The habit which the citizens of Maracaïbo contract from their infancy of sailing on the lake, whether for pleasure, fishing, or the transport of the articles its southern borders produce, gives them at a very early period, a taste for navigation. Soon finding in this place no means of indulging in the practice of it they repair in crowds to Porto-Cavello, Guayra, and the other ports, where a more active navigation serves at the same time to give them employment, and gratify their ambition. They perform with equal ability, coasting, or longer voyages. In those intervals when war suspends their commercial enterprizes, they embark on board privateers. But whatever line they pursue, they never belie the reputation they possess of being as good soldiers as sailors. The neighbourhood of the lake, in the waters of which they exer-

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cise themselves in their early years, renders them as excellent swimmers as expert divers.

Those who resist the attractions of the sea, raise herds of cattle, or take care of those of their fathers. Nothing better evinces their aptitude to this species of occupation than the immense number of beasts with which the Savannas of Maracaïbo are covered. The principal ones are those of Jobo, Ancon, Palmares, and Cannades. I ought to mention, that there is more merit in raising cattle in the Savannas of Maracaïbo, than in any other place in these provinces, because having neither rivers, nor ponds that never dry up, drought occasions the death of many, in spite of the precautions they take, in cases of this sort, to drive them towards those parts where they can with convenience water them.

But that which does more honour to the inhabitants of Maracaïbo, is their singularly lively wit, their application to literature, and the progress they make, notwithstanding the wretched state of public education among them. Whilst the jesuits were charged with the instruction of youth, their schools produced individuals who spoke Latin with an elegance and fluency rarely met with; possessing perfectly the art of oratory, and masters of the rules of poetry; writing their language in a style as remarkable for its purity as the boldness of its ideas, and the order and perspicuity with which they were presented; in a word endowed with every qualification that constitutes the man of letters. The expulsion of these learned preceptors took from the youth of Maracaïbo, every means of instruction.

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Notwithstanding the barrenness of resources which education finds at Maracaïbo, we there see young persons so favoured by nature, that the slightest elementary instruction at once developes in them all the faculties, which in Europe do not manifest themselves until after long study, and the care of the best teachers. What adds to the singularity of the phenomenon is, that this excess of natural genius frequently becomes prejudicial to the tranquility of the families of Maracaïbo; for it is enough for many of these young men, to know the conjugation and government of the verbs, to be qualified to write pieces, whose subtilty would appear to the knavish advocate better than the productions of the counsel who establishes his reasons on the principles of the civil law. Such suits as should never have been instituted, or which the tribunals would instantly have decided, become interminable and ruinous by the sophisms with which these scribblers envelope in darkness causes the most simple and clear. This disease, very prevalent at Maracaïbo, is by no means a stranger in other Spanish territories. The penal laws which the legislature has been forced to enact, to lessen the number of these imps of chicane, whom they call *pendolistas**, literally prove that the evil is general enough.

In allowing that the inhabitants of Maracaïbo have activity, courage, and genius, we have nothing more to say in their favour. They are reproached with having very little regard to their word, and with thinking themselves not bound by their signature until

* *Quick Writers.*

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after they have in vain endeavoured to release themselves from it by law. Their reputation in this respect is so well established, that all strangers whom business draws to Maracaïbo, say it is much better to form connections of interest with the women than with the men, because they alone have there that good faith and firmness which, in every other part, is the peculiar heritage of the men.

Since the course of description has led me to speak of the women of Maracaïbo, I ought not to let it be unknown that they are in their youth paragons of modesty; in marriage, faithful wives and excellent mothers of families. Affection for their husbands; the cares of their households; and the education of their children, are the objects which divide all their moments, and occupy all their solicitude. They know not, however, before marriage, any other amusement than music. Their favourite instrument is the harp.—There are few houses in which the harmonious sound of this instrument is not heard every evening, and every day of festival.

The catholic worship has at Maracaïbo only one parish church, aided by a chapel of ease, called St. Juan de Dios. Of the four monasteries, and the same number of nunneries, mentioned by Alcedo, the author Dictionary of the of America, that of the Franciscans, which is well furnished, well supported, and well served, is the only ever known here; but they still venerate in the parish church, with as much fervour as ever, the same crucifix, of which it is made a sacred duty to relate the prodigies.

They adore also, at Maracaïbo, a virgin, whose ap-

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pearance, inauguration, and miracles, demand of my piety the publication which I am about to make.

This virgin bears the surname of *Chiquinquira*, because it was in a village of that name, situated in the kingdom of Santa Fe, that she made her first appearance. Her passion is to paint herself on dishclouts, and in the midst of filth. In 1586 they found her in a farm-yard, three-fourths rotten, painted on an old and shabby piece of linen, which one would almost instantly have thrown away if, in the hands of the good woman Ramos, who took her by the ends of her fingers, her colours had not suddenly animated themselves, and if their liveliness had not given to her figure an expression that made them cry out a miracle, and that softens the most hardened hearts. They dedicated a temple to her; a fountain rose under the altar where she was placed. She hastened to communicate to its waters miraculous virtues, to which she owes a reputation that will end only with the Spaniards.

She introduced herself into Maracaïbo under the same form, and in the same manner as at Chiquinquira, and that is the reason she has preserved its name.

An old mulattress taking one day, either from chance, or from necessity, the only dishclout she had in the house, perceived some colours upon it. She stretched it out, and the figure of the virgin struck her eyes emanating from their orbit. She observed the colours brighten, and the picture in a twinkling assumed the most dazzling brilliancy. She called witnesses, and the miracle, proved by a crowd of old

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women, became a sacred truth that gained the virgin the hearts and respect of the whole neighbourhood. The mulattress, the depositary of this precious relic, exhibited it at her own house to public veneration. A great resort to her was established, miracles commenced, and very shortly all Maracaibo addressed their prayers exclusively to our lady of Chiquinquira. This celebrity was too great, and too rapid for the civil and ecclesiastical authorities not to think of giving to this virgin a habitation more decent than her own inclinations had made her choose. The common council repaired to the mulattress to announce to her that they were about to place our lady of Chiquinquira in the parish church. Neither remonstrances nor tears could change this resolution. All the clergy, all the local authorities, all the people went in procession to seek the virgin and remove her to the parish church. Arrived at the corner of a street which it was necessary to turn, the picture acquired a weight, that the whole power of mankind could not move. After innumerable useless prayers, one of the assistants said, the virgin was doubtless averse to going to the parish church, but she might perhaps prefer that of St. Juan de Dios. They followed this inspiration, and succeeded. The virgin assumed her natural lightness, and they placed her in the chapel of ease of St. Juan de Dios, where she immediately declared herself the warm protectress of all mariners who might invoke her. One cannot imagine that she wants vows, or that in every perilous case they do not have recourse to her. On her part, her zeal and her power are justified by so many vessels

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saved after due invocation, that one must have lost one's senses to doubt her power.

Maracaïbo is the seat of a governor who enjoys the same salary, and exercises the same functions as the governor of Cumana. Concerning the defence of the city, see article *Armed Force*, in Chap. V. The description of its port and lake will be found in Chap. II.

Its latitude is 10 degrees 30 minutes north; its longitude 74 degrees 6 minutes west from the meridian of Paris; its distance from Caraccas one hundred and forty leagues.

Merida.

The city of Merida, founded in 1558, by John Rodriguez Suarez, under the name of Santiago de Los Caballeros, is situated in a valley three leagues long, and about three-quarters of a league wide in its broadest part. It is surrounded by three rivers, the first bears the name of Mucujun, and takes its course to the north, in what is called *los Paramos de Conejos*, the rabbit warrens. It flows from north to south, and passes by the eastern part of the city; the second, known under the name of the Albarregas, comes from the north-west and passes to the south-west of the town; the third is the Chama; it runs from the east, and directs its course by the south of Merida to the north, until it discharges itself in the lake of Maracaïbo. It receives the two first rivers at a little distance from Merida, and from the waters of a multitude of other streams by which it is successively in-

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creased, it acquires the size of a river of the first order. They cross these rivers on foot and on horseback, on bridges of wood constructed with solidity enough to maintain at all seasons, a free communication. None of these rivers is navigable, on account of the rapidity of their currents and the obstacles opposed to navigation by straights, sometimes formed by rocks and at others by mountains that contract its bed so as to create falls which no boat can pass without evident danger of being dashed to pieces. Another powerful reason for not having sought to overcome these difficulties, is the excessive insalubrity of that part of the lake of Maracaïbo, into which the river Chama disembogues. It is, in fact, impossible to pass two hours on this spot without leaving it in a fever, which most frequently assumes a character of malignity that inevitably conducts to the grave.

Their only cultures then, are befriended by the rivers which water the environs of Merida. I ought to mention to the praise of the inhabitants, that their industry perfectly seconds the advantages of nature. At some distance from the city are plantations of sugar, cacao and coffee, the quality of which is superior to the same commodities raised in any other part of the province.

All the environs of Merida are covered with the provisions of the country, with fruits, pulse, such as maize, beans, peas of every sort, potatos, cassada, wheat of the finest quality, barley, &c. All these articles are consumed on the spot, and are so abundant, that the poorest people have always more food than is necessary for their subsistence. The butche-

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ries of Merida supply Varinas and Pedraza. Most excellent meat is purchased there at a very moderate price.

The climate of Merida is exceedingly variable: they experience there every day the four seasons of the year. Yet the inhabitants insist, that neither the cold nor the heat is ever felt to a degree that can inconvenience, and that throughout the year either silk or woollen clothes may be indifferently worn; but they cannot deny that the variations of weather are so rapid and sensible as to cause frequent complaints. They peculiarly dread the west wind. It never blows without leaving traces of its malignity. The rains are heavy; they fall through the whole year; but with redoubled violence from the month of March to November; and at all times they leave some interval of dry weather.

The city of Merida is the seat of a bishop and a chapter. It possesses a college, and a seminary, where the ministers for the catholic worship are formed, and where youth receive those principles of education that are suitable to every station of life. There are masters to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic; preceptors for the lower classes, professors of philosophy, theology, morality, the canon and the civil law. All the schools are under the direction and superintendance of a rector and vice-rector, and under the immediate authority of a bishop.

The luxury of science has made so much progress at Merida, that they have resolved on obtaining an university that should dispense with the necessity of going to seek doctorial caps in those of Santa Fe or

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Caraccas. They sent in 1801, the vice-rector of the college, as a deputy from them to the university of Caraccas, to solicit its approbation of the request the inhabitants of Merida wished to make to his catholic majesty for the establishment of an university, but in spite of the talent and personal qualifications of the vice-rector, it was decided against the wish of his constituents. Their request has been transmitted to the king. It certainly will not be readily granted, because the existing system of the government is not to multiply this sort of establishments. But, in the end, it will not be surprising if perseverance and importunity should force the government to comply, against its inclination. How many times does it not find itself reduced to the painful extremity of authorizing, or tolerating, what it was a part of its plan to hinder or prohibit.

Independent of the cathedral, religion has attained at Merida houses of worship, the number of which is at least proportioned to that of its inhabitants. The orders of St. Dominic and of St. Augustin, have each a convent; that of St. Clair has also another.—They carefully keep up the church of a convent of Cordeliers, that has been suppressed. That of the hospital is striking; then come the chapels of ease of Milla, Mucujun del Espejo, and of Unao; lastly, that of Misericordia, lately erected.

The number of the inhabitants of Merida amounts to eleven thousand five hundred persons, of all colours and of all classes. That of the slaves is less numerous than any other. That of the whites has been long divided into two parties; those of Serradas

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and Guavirias, the names of the two principal founders of the city, who vowed a hatred against each other which their descendants have preserved with so much obstinacy that it cannot be said to be even yet perfectly extinguished, though its explosions, heretofore so frequent, have not been for some years reproduced. Without this unfortunate circumstance, the population would this day have been more considerable, and the cultivation more flourishing.

An open disposition, a sound understanding, and a love of literature, is remarked in the whites of Merida. No class there disdains labour. Agriculture, the raising of cattle, or the ecclesiastical state, are the career of the whites. Persons of colour apply themselves to useful occupations which at once prove their understanding and industry. They fabricate different articles in cotton and wool, the cheapness of which makes them preferred to our linens of Europe.—Among these fabrics are carpets of the wool of the country, one ell long by rather more than half an ell wide, ornamented with flowers, and dyed on the spot with indigenous plants, whose red, green, blue, and yellow are as bright and continue as lastingly lively, as those of our most famous manufactures. To have mentioned the local industry of the place, is enough to have no occasion to say, that there reigns in the city an ease which does not allow of beholding any poor or wretched beings.

The latitude of Merida is 8 degrees 10 minutes north; its longitude 73 degrees 45 minutes west.—Its distance from Maracaïbo is eighty leagues to the south; from Caraccas a hundred and forty leagues

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south-east, and from Varinas twenty-five leagues south-east also.

Truxillo.

There is no city in the province of Venezuela which has, from its origin, made such rapid progress as Truxillo. In the first century of its foundation it had edifices that would have been deemed splendid in European cities, and this magnificence, a symptom of the application of its inhabitants to culture, drew thither a number of laborious Spaniards, and contributed to augment its population. Every thing announced that this city would acquire a considerable growth when, in 1678, the buccaneer Francis Gramont entered the province of Venezuela with a handful of men, and traversed the whole of it with as much security and confidence as if he had a formidable army. The renowned opulence of Truxillo determined the intrepid buccaneer to direct thither his desolating steps. Neither the distance of eighty leagues from the port where he disembarked, nor the badness of the roads he had to pass, nor the heats, nor the rains he had to endure, nor the disasters which the armed force of the country might make him experience on his route, would alter his resolution. What appeared an obstacle to the eyes of a man of rational bravery, was but an excitement to buccaneers. They disdained every action in which it was not necessary to perform extraordinary things to escape death, or inflict it. We cannot say they were heroes, because booty, not glory, was the motive of their courage;

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but in placing them in the rank of robbers we cannot, without injustice, refuse them the name of illustrious. Grammont with his men reached Truxillo, killed or put to flight all its inhabitants, pillaged, sacked and reduced to ashes all the superb edifices of the city. The existence of the ruins still causes the eye to sadden in contemplating the evidences of the past grandeur of the city, and these indications of what it would have been at this day.

The Spaniards who escaped the carnage and the flames, fled with their families to Merida, where the fear lest the disaster should be renewed, fixed them for ever. There remained at Truxillo only the old and impotent, whom pity had caused to be spared, and the want of strength forbade to fly. We perceive here the most explanatory reason for the moderate population of Truxillo. Yet the salubrity of the air, and the fertility of the soil, have successively drawn there inhabitants enough to make their number actually rise to seven thousand six hundred persons.

The land about it produces sugar, cacao, indigo, coffee, and in general all the productions of the torrid and some few of the temperate zones. Wheat grows superiorly, and its flour differs little from that of Europe. They reap it in abundance, and it becomes to the cultivator an article of commerce that compensates his labours. They raise with considerable assiduity, other commodities, and we may say, that in general, the inhabitants of Truxillo pay to public prosperity at least one part of the tribute every citizen owes.

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Agriculture is not their only occupation. Some raise sheep, goats, and they observe that the mutton there is larger than in any other part of the province, and the meat much better. The cheeses made there are also preferred to those of other places. The care they bestow in washing and carding their wool, enables them to fabricate goods from it, the sale of which is always certain and profitable.

The women, more laborious in Truxillo than any where else, apply themselves in making sweetmeats, for which they frequently receive orders beforehand, in order to resell them in the province, or send them abroad. This branch of industry, insignificant as it appears, does not fail of relieving that miserable class, which in all the other cities is embarrassed by its own existence.

They carry the commercial articles of Truxillo to Maracaïbo by the lake, which is 25 leagues to the west, but the intercourse most pursued is with Carora, where they send their goat and sheep-skins to be dressed. This intercourse, however, is not exempt from inconvenience, because it is necessary to cross the plains of Llonay, so unwholesome that the traveller is obliged to hasten his march not to be infected with the malignant fever the least stop is sure to give.

We have just said the city of Truxillo enjoys a pure air; but its waters, although clear and light, are impregnated with metallic particles, and occasion goitres*, which, however, are only an inconvenience, as they do not in the least affect the health.

* Swellings under the throat, the hernia gutturis.

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The spot occupied by the city is shut in by two mountains so as to give it the shape of a coffin. The parish church is constructed with very little taste; but it is solid and decent. It has a chapel of ease dependent upon it, which is called *Calvaire*. There is a monastery of Franciscans, and one of Dominicans. There is also a house of Dominican nuns, which the king with difficulty granted liberty to found. It was at first forbidden to continue the building, and this inhibition was not taken off in 1636 but at the instance and request of the bishop of Mata. Society has no other reproach to make to the nuns of Truxillo than having renounced the soft pleasures of maternity. They all labour in their solitude, and make with bark, a number of little delicate articles, equally curious and useful, and which every one is eager to purchase.

Truxillo possesses also a hospital, dedicated to our lady of Chiquinquira, and a common council for the administration of justice and the police.

Its latitude is 8 degrees 40 minutes north. Its distance from Caraccas, to the north, is 105 leagues; from Merida, to the south, 20 leagues; from Goanara, to the south-east, 30 leagues.

Government of Varinas—Varinas.

It was only in 1787 that the city of Varinas was detached from the government of Maracaïbo to become itself the seat of a separate government, which they have formed at the expence of those of Venezuela and Maracaïbo.

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The chief has only the title of political governor, although his functions, in the district assigned to him, are the same as those of other governors in the civil, military, and religious departments. He has also, like them, a salary of four thousand hard dollars a year. The growth which this part of the province has taken within a few years, and the ease with which it may be invaded by means of the navigable rivers which empty themselves into the Oronoko, has determined the erection of this government; and, in order the better to secure its defence, they raised a militia in 1803, and gave to the city of Varinas a garrison, consisting of a company of seventy-seven men of the regular troops of the new establishment.

The city of Varinas has been long known in the European markets from the quality of the tobacco which its territory produces, and which prejudice, rather than reason, has caused to be deemed superior to any other, when it is, according to all report, in fact inferior to the tobacco raised elsewhere, and particularly at Cumanacoa, in the province of Cumana. Yet the prepossession is such, that every package of tobacco which arrives at Amsterdam or Hamburgh under any other name than that of Varinas, sells, whatever may be its quality, at twenty or twenty-five per cent. less.

Experience has so thoroughly convinced the Spaniards that the commerce of the north judges from appearances, and not from principle, that from whatever part of these provinces tobacco comes, it is never sent without this title of recommendation, and the European purchaser, deceived as he is, sustains

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on that account no loss. It is true that the plantations of almost all the tobacco that is exported are at Varinas, and that none goes out from other places but when the crops exceed the local consumption, for which they reserve all the best that is produced in the provinces.

For some time they have remarked that the tobacco of Varinas is more subject to spoil than any other. Scarcely has it undergone the last process of preparation, which heretofore used to preserve it five or six years, before a destructive worm introduces itself into the heart of the tobacco, corrodes all the interior, and converts it into dust. The surface appears but slightly injured. It is this which renders the damage more difficult to be perceived.

The goodness of the land, and the situation of the country of Varinas, nominate the province of Varinas to a conspicuous part in the theatre of commerce.—Sugar, coffee, cotton, indigo, and in general all the fruits of the torrid zone, there find a soil adapted to each, and their quality is unrivalled. The inhabitants, for a long time occupied in the cultivation of tobacco, believed that nature had refused to the soil of Varinas the virtue of affording any other production. This prejudice is entirely dissipated. They at this day cultivate, and attempt every thing. The commodities are transported in a great measure by water to Guiana. The shipping-place is upon the river Portuguese, five leagues below the city, at a spot called *Tocunos*. There are also within the jurisdiction of Varinas very large commons, from whence they draw a number of beeves and mules

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that are exported by the Oronoko, or consumed in the province.

The city enjoys a tolerably pure air, though the thermometer of Reaumur is seldom below twenty-four degrees. They reckon six thousand persons. The whole of the public edifices are reduced to one parish church and a hospital.

Varinas is in 7 degrees 40 minutes of north latitude, and a hundred leagues to the south-east of Caraccas.

San Jayme.

It is but a little time that San Jayme has had the character of a city, and consequently, that it has had a common council. It has no title, either from its population or culture, to such a distinction. It is situated at the confluence of several rivers which form but one bed to empty themselves into the Apura, about a dozen leagues after their union. The city of San Jayme, thus surrounded by large rivers, has, for its defence from their annual inundations nothing but a hillock of sand, upon which it is placed. The inhabitants find themselves for three months of the year so environed by water, that they can neither return to, nor leave their houses except in canoes.

The soil sandy and dry, offers to the cultivator no flattering prospect. The edifices of the city, including the church, correspond exactly with the feeble resources the inhabitants find in a soil so little favoured by nature.

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The city of San Jayme is situated in 7 degrees 50 minutes of north latitude, and at seventy-five leagues to the south of Caraccas.

San Fernando of Apura.

Pastoral nations having occasion for much more land than agricultural people, find themselves very much confined in the same space, where an equal number of these last would be at their ease. It is solely to this cause that the city of San Fernando owes its existence. The inhabitants of Gunara having given to common fields a preference over cultivation, soon covered the savannas, within a certain distance from the city, with their flocks. In proportion as population augmented, the number of commoners increased also. Those who found the soil allotted and occupied, were obliged to seek at a distance land suitable to their purposes. Their views were turned towards the south, and did not fix but on the right bank of the river Apura, where the excellence of the pasture completely answered their wishes.

When they saw themselves sufficiently numerous to form a colony, they asked permission to be made a parish independent of any other; and they obtained it. Their ambition did not confine itself to that; they did not delay soliciting for their village the honours of a city, and, by a chance remarkable enough, their request was granted.

The property of almost all the inhabitants is in common fields, and breeding farms for cattle and

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mules. They cultivate very few articles. The climate is hot, but healthy; the water is excellent.—The city, without being large, is tolerably well built. The church, the only one there, has neither the grandeur nor the architecture of a handsome edifice; it is, notwithstanding, neat, and well kept up. The population is almost six thousand souls.

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CHAPTER XI.

OF SPANISH GUIANA AND THE RIVER ORONOKO.

Division of Guiana—First expedition to Guiana—Second expedition—Foundation of the city of St. Thomas—The river Oronoko—Its sources—Its course—Communication of the Oronoko with the river of the Amazons, by the Rio-Negro—Continuation of the course of the Oronoko—River Meta, tributary to the Oronoko—Advantages of its navigation—Destroyed by the commerce of Carthagena—Results—River Apura—Cattle raised on its banks—Laborious and dangerous navigation of the Oronoko—Navigation of the mouth of the Oronoko to St. Thomas—The River Caroni—Continuation of the navigation of the Oronoko—Delicious variety presented by the banks of the Oronoko—Body and rapidity of its waters—Its annual rise—Tides—Fishes of the Oronoko—Amphibious Animals—The Cayman—Iguana—Chaquira—Lapa—Water Dog—Liron—Manati—Importance of Guiana—Its extent and population—Lower Guiana—Connexions of the Caribs with the Dutch—Political relations between the Dutch of Surinam and the Spaniards of Guiana—Upper Guiana—Its cultures—Saint Thomas—Its climate—Commerce—Encouragements that industry demands—Plan—Bad situation of the capital—Necessity of placing it further from the sea—Where it ought to be placed—Reduction of the Caribs of Lower Guiana—New modes of cultivating and peopling Guiana—El Dorado—Various expeditions for its discovery—Expedition of Urra—Opinion on El Dorado—Modern Expedition.

THE whole space between the river Oronoko to the north and west, the Amazons to the south, the sea to the east, and the 70th degree of longitude from the meridian of Paris to the west, is properly what Geography designates under the name of Guiana.

Division of Guiana.

The coast from the mouth of the Amazons to that of the Oronoko, occupying an extent of a hundred and twenty leagues, is possessed by four powers. The Portuguese have the southern part. They extended, before the treaty of peace with France of the 29th of September, 1801, from the mouth of the Amazons to

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cape North, to the east of the island of Carpori. By this treaty, the new limits of Portuguese Guiana, and of the French Guiana, were terminated by the river Carapana, which discharges itself into the river Amazons in 20 minutes of north latitude, below fort Macapa. These limits ascend the course of the river to its source, from whence they take their direction towards the great chain of mountains which divide the course of the waters, and follow the sinuosities of those mountains to the point nearest to Rio-Blanco, between 2 and 3 degrees of north latitude.

All Portuguese Guiana is then entirely on the left bank of the river Amazons, bounded on the north by the possessions of the French, to the 55th degree of west longitude. The Portuguese border more west on the Spaniards. The equinoctial line ought, according to treaties, to be the boundary; but they have so encroached on the Spanish territory, that their establishments extend thirty-two leagues to the north of the line; for it is at this distance that the isle of St. Joseph, and the mountain La Gloria-del-Cocui, which are now deemed the limits, are situated. The Spanish fort of St. Carlos, in 1 degree 55 minutes north, is destined to prevent any new usurpation, and to recover, if it be possible, the territory that is lost: what renders it most difficult is, that the Portuguese already have settlements on this very spot, which they would not abandon but with regret, and as they have a direct interest, in consequence of the fertility of the soil, and the facility of transporting their commodities by the Amazons, in retaining these possessions, although more than three hundred leagues from

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the sea, it is more than probable that they will maintain themselves there, because the Spaniards having neither the same convenience for the transport of their products, nor the same disposition for their cultivation, will never exercise so much ardour in driving them out as the Portuguese will manifest in defending their establishments.

French Guiana is bounded on the south by the river Capara, which mingles its waters with those of the Amazons; on the north by the Maroni; on the east by the sea; and on the west by the Spanish possessions.

Surinam, Essequibo, and Demerara, are Dutch possessions, bounded on the east by the sea; on the south by the river Maroni; on the north by the Essequibo, according to treaty, but they have clandestinely carried these limits to cape Nassau; and on the west by Spanish Guiana.

What remains to the Spaniards of Guiana is bounded on the east by the sea, from cape Nassau to the mouth of the Oronoko, distant one from the other about thirty leagues. The river Oronoko is its southern limit for the distance of five hundred and fifty leagues from the sea; it then becomes its western boundary, because from this first point, it runs back to the south for the space of a hundred leagues, where it receives the waters of the Guaviari; from thence the Oronoko, directing its bed to the east, serves no longer for the boundary of Spanish Guiana, which in this part is limited by the Portuguese possessions.

The conquest of the provinces of Venezuela, of

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Cumana, and of Maracaïbo, gave too much occupation during the first forty years of this enterprise, to the few Spaniards to whom it was entrusted, to permit them to think of carrying their arms any further, while the soil of the country where they were was so warmly disputed, that their very existence was for a long time regarded as precarious.

The first European who appears to have attempted to enter the Oronoko, was the lieutenant-general John Cornejo. He ventured in 1531, to penetrate by the mouths of this river. He surmounted a variety of obstacles; but such serious ones presented themselves, that his vessel went to pieces on some rocks even with the water. We know that the major part of his crew was saved, and that those unfortunate men escaped being the food of fishes only to become that of the Indians.

First Expedition to Guiana.

The Indians subdued and to be subdued in the province of Venezuela, incessantly related to the conquerors, whom they saw so greedy of gold, that there was to the south a country far distant abounding prodigiously in gold and silver. These multiplied and uniform communications had established an opinion, that in the centre of what is at this day called Guiana there indubitably was a country covered with gold, and on that account named *El Dorado*, of which I shall hereafter speak more particularly. A similar chimera, absolute as it was, determined a soldier of Martin Proveda, chief of an expedition that

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went in 1566 from Peru to make conquests, to go clandestinely into Spain with the design of making an offer to the king of reducing El Dorado. He named himself Don Pedro Malava de Silva. His propositions although extravagant were received. The king gave him for two lives, that is, transmissible to his son, the government of all he might be able to conquer from the Omegas, Omaguas, and Quinacos Indians, who were thought to be the inhabitants of this region of massy gold, and the right of soil, or an extent of twenty-five leagues square, with the Indians he might find there; moreover, the staff of *alguazil*, or major in chancery, if any should be established there. His dispatches were signed the 15th May, 1568.

Silva immediately began to connect himself with daring associates. Six hundred Spaniards consented to administer to his ambition. He landed with them on the island of Margaretta, from whence, instead of passing over to the continent and taking a south course to go directly to Guiana, he repaired to Borburata, leaving at Margaretta the malcontents of his force, who had persuaded themselves that to become rich it was enough only to breath the air of America. Arrived at Borburata, he was obliged to leave there a part of his men disheartened by the difficulties of the undertaking. At Valencia he experienced a new defection; this reduced his body to a hundred and forty men, with whom he took the road for Guiana, that is to say, he directed his course to the south; for the want of roads left the travellers no other resource than the compass. But the forests it was necessary

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to penetrate, the rivers, the swamps, the venomous insects and reptiles, the wild fruits with which they were obliged to support themselves, destroyed almost all his people, and compelled Silva to renounce his rash expedition. After five months' continual struggle against every species of privation, and the inconveniences of a country that appeared the domain of ferocious beasts alone, he arrived at Barquisimeto in the month of March, 1570. Such was the result of this unfortunate expedition.

Second Expedition.

Silva, far from being discouraged by all these difficulties, departed for Spain, made a new recruitment of a hundred and seventy men, and embarked with them at St. Lucar. He made his descent in Guiana, upon the coast, between the two rivers of Oronoko and the Amazons. It was exactly on the territory of the Caribs, the strongest and most warlike of all the Indians. He had, on the one hand, to maintain against these Anthropophagi, combats so repeated and so violent; and on the other, to contend with a country covered with swamps, and so unhealthy, that he, as well as his companions, soon became the victims of his temerity. They all without exception perished, and were in succession the principal dishes of their conquerors. This was in 1574.

The bad success of these expeditions was enough to render them averse to making any similar attempts; but not sufficient to induce them to renounce Guiana, recommended as much by the majesty of the river

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with which it is watered, as by the richness of the metals of which they believed it the depository.

They attempted the conquest of it on a new plan. They substituted persuasion and morality for the force that had not succeeded. They sent in 1576 two Jesuits as missionaries, who for three years preached the evangelists with tolerable success; they were obliged to suspend their apostolical labours and retire. History adds that the Dutch desirous of this possession, drove them from it.

Foundation of the City of St. Thomas.

At length, in 1586, Anthony Berrio founded on the right bank of the Oronoko, and at fifty leagues from its mouth, a city under the name of St. Thomas. He confined his desires to the maintaining himself in the city, leaving to time and the zeal of the missionaries the softening of the ferocity of Indian manners, and the inspiring them with a taste for social life, and the establishing with them amicable and useful connections. In truth, it was not on the part of the Indians that the new city experienced much opposition, but on that of the English, the Dutch, and even the French. It was for ever attacked, pillaged, and devastated by one or other of these three nations, all of whom coveted this country. The Dutch particularly, had already established with the natives a commerce by barter, too lucrative not to be maintained. Their efforts by land and by water were proportioned to the interest by which they were actuated. In process of time, the Spaniards thought of fortify-

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ing it, and imagining that the city would be more out of reach of all insult if further removed from the sea, they successively carried it back, and in 1764 they transferred it to ninety leagues from the sea, and on the right bank of the Oronoko.

The River Oronoko.

But before engaging in the description of Spanish Guiana, destined by the fertility of its territory and situation to become the centre of the commerce of all these parts, with which navigation facilitates an intercourse, it is right to describe the famous river Oronoko, the first and immediate cause of all the advantages futurity promises to Spanish Guiana. I will not dissemble that this task deserves so much the more the whole of my attention, as it will furnish, upon one of the greatest rivers in the world, information that no other author has given but imperfectly. The inaccuracies that I have ascertained the literary world owes to the Jesuits, the fathers Gumilla, Coleti, and Caulin, missionaries to the banks of the Oronoko, authorize me in asserting that they have done more honour to their zeal than their understanding, their boldness than their exactitude.

I shall beg leave to consider the Oronoko in its double relation, of cultivation and of commerce. To accomplish the first object, I shall take it at its source, and descend with it to the capital of Guiana; for the second, I shall follow the ordinary method, that is to say, after having conducted from the interior to St. Thomas all the territorial riches, I shall take from the

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mouths of the Oronoko, all the vessels that go there in quest of them.

Its Sources.

The sources of the Oronoko are but little less known by the Spaniards than those of the Nile were to the Europeans, and even to the Africans, before James Bruce. The father Gumilla, whom I have just mentioned, does not hesitate to place them, in the map he has annexed to his *Oronoko Illustrated*, to the south-west of Santa Fe, Bogota; and to give to this river a direct course from south-west to north-east. But no sooner was the Oronoko ascended to its most remote parts, than the opinion of father Gumilla was acknowledged to be false, because an opportunity presented itself to ascertain that its waters came from the environs of the lake Parma, situated to the south of the capital of Guiana. Some celebrated geographers, in the number of whom Mr. Bonne is to be found, make them flow from the lake itself; and others say they spring from the mountains, situated to the north-west of the lake. This opinion is the most believed, and most deserves to be so. It is, nevertheless, very difficult to collect information sufficiently positive upon this fact. The savage Indians render access to the spot too dangerous; recourse then must be had to probabilities.

The mountains to the north-west of the lake Parima, are called, in the language of the Indians, *Ibirinoko;* it is very probable that they have, according to their custom, given to this celebrated river, which

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there takes its source, the name of these mountains, of which the Spaniards have made Oronoco; the French, Oronoque; and the English Oronoko, &c. It is also equally natural, that if the lake of Parima had been the reservoir of this grand river, they could not have failed to give it that appellation which is likewise Indian. But, one thing more, no one has been able with certainty to verify the fact; because the savages form to it an insurmountable obstacle.—Of this Mr. Humboldt had positive experience in 1800, at the time of his voyage to Rio-Negro. Arrived at the point where the Casiquiari branches from the Oronoko, he wished, himself, to ascertain the real sources of this river; but he found it impossible: he was obliged to content himself with the testimony he could collect from a few Indians.

Several rivulets, flowing from the southern bank of the mountains Ibirinoco, unite their waters at eight or ten leagues from their sources, and form a river, which, in the course of five hundred leagues it has to traverse to the sea, receives the tribute of an infinity of streams, to which it owes the honorable denomination of the river, geographers, as well as the natives of the country, call the Oronoko.

Course of the Oronoko.

It is thought that the course of the Oronoko, for the first hundred leagues is from north to south: it leaves in this space, at sixty leagues from its left bank, the lake of Parima. The contributions of the

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rivers that unite themselves to the Oronoko, give it such an immense body, and a current so rapid, that even before it flows a hundred leagues from its source it has as much water and strength as the most considerable rivers. From the Esmeraldes to St. Fernando of Atabapa, the Oronoko runs from the east to the north-west. It is in this place that the canal of Casiquiari is. It forms the communication of the Oronoko, with the Amazons by the Rio-Negro. As history needs some elucidation on this important point of geography, the reader must permit me a slight digression.

Communication of the Oronoko with the River Amazons by the Rio-Negro.

The Spanish missionaries, since the discovery of the new world, the sole depositaries, of the historical and geographical particulars of the Oronoko, have always denied the communication of these two rivers, and their testimony had so much the more weight as they were the only Europeans to whom it was possible to penetrate into these places, inhabited by savages. It is in vain that Sampson de Fer, geographer to his Catholic majesty, laid down, in 1713, this communication in his chart. It is in vain that Condamine assured himself, in his voyage to Peru, that the Oronoko and the Amazons communicated with each other; the apostles of the Oronoko always maintained that this communication did not exist.

Father Gumilla is the person who has manifested the most tenaciousness in endeavouring to render

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prevalent the false opinion he had embraced. He maintains, in his *Oronoko Illustrated*, in a tone of conviction, or rather of ill-humour, that no one can know better than he, all that relates to the Oronoko, because, having travelled its banks for twenty years, with the intention of writing the history of it, he has a right to contradict every thing that does not accord with his observations. "Neither I," says he, "nor "any of the missionaries, who have passed, and who "do pass their lives on the banks of the Oronoko, "have ever seen the river enter the Rio-Negro, or "come out of it; for if there do exist a communica-"tion between them, it is necessary to know which "is at the expence of it, that is, whether the Rio-"Negro discharges its waters into the Oronoko, or "the Oronoko discharges into the Rio-Negro. But "the great and long chain of mountains that is found "between these two rivers, makes this pretended "communication impossible, and every doubt on this "point ridiculous." After such testimony, which every thing concurs to render respectable, it would be scarcely possible still to believe in the communication of the Oronoko with the Rio-Negro, and by this with the Amazons; yet some later geographers have proved that they are not the dupes of the tone of assurance of Father Gumilla, and in spite of the pretended chain of mountains which, according to him, separates the two rivers, they have continued to make them communicate. It is, however, possible that some doubt may, notwithstanding, remain; and, under the persuasion that whatever tends to dissipate it must needs be favourably received, I hasten here to

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deposit the truth, supported by proofs round which all opinions ought to rally.

Baron Humboldt, to whom the sciences already owe so many obligations, after having traversed the province of Venezuela as a naturalist, geographer, and politician, conceived, in 1800, the design of ascending the Oronoko, and determining its communication with the Rio-Negro. He entered the Oronoko by the river Apura, and arrived, after incredible difficulties, at Fort St. Charles, conterminous with the Portuguese possessions. "From Fort St. Charles," says that illustrious philosopher, in one of his letters to the captain-general of Caraccas, dated the 23d of August, 1800, "we have returned to Guiana, by the "Casiquiari, a very large branch of the Oronoko, and "which forms its communication with the Rio-Ne-"gro. The force of the current, the immense size "of the gnats and emmets, and the want of popula-"tion, render this navigation fatiguing and danger-"ous. We entered the Oronoko by the Casiquiari, "at three and a half degrees; we ascended the Oro-"noko as far as the Esmeraldes, the last establish-"ment of the Spaniards," &c. There certainly wants nothing more to enable the communication of the Oronoko to pass henceforth as a certain fact, which madness alone can have a right to dispute.—I shall now resume my description.

Continuation of the Course of the Oronoko.

The Oronoko, from its source to the Atures, traverses a territory which it fertilizes to no kind of pur-

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pose. Occupied almost entirely by savage Indians, whose reduction will probably be for some ages unaccomplished, and situated at so great a distance from the sea, it will for a long time be abandoned to simple nature.

Before arriving at the Atures, the Oronoko directs its course to the north, as far as the mouth of the river Meta, from whence it inclines to the north-east, to take, at length, an eastern direction, which it maintains quite to the sea.

What they call *los Saltos de Atures*, are cataracts formed by rocks, which in vain dispute the passage of the Oronoko, whose force, augmented by the rivers Guaviari and Vichada, which it has just before received, immediately becomes sufficiently large to brave every obstacle that can be opposed to it.—Scarcely does it touch the resistance made to it, than it becomes agitated, rises up, and not being able to level a barrier nature has rendered indestructible, it bounds over it with a terrific noise, depositing on the very place of the shock, a foam of extreme whiteness, as a proof of its rage. No vessel, great or small, can pass these cataracts. The navigator has no other resource, whether he ascend or descend the river, than to take his canoe on shore, and carry or drag it to the point where danger no longer exists.

Immediately after the cataracts of Atures, the Oronoko receives from the east the river Abacuna, and from the west the Bichao. The uncultivated countries they run through render the description of them little interesting. It is the same with the rivers Chiricua and Meteya. The one that merits great

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consideration is the river Meta; it blends its waters with those of the Oronoko at thirty leagues below the cataracts of Atures, and at a hundred and twenty-five leagues from St. Thomas of Guiana.

The river Meta, tributary of the Oronoko.

Nature seems to have destined the river Meta to form vast commercial relations between the whole eastern part of the kingdom of Santa Fe and Spanish Guiana. It takes its source at a hundred and fifty leagues south-west of its mouth, in the Oronoko.—A number of the rivers of the kingdom of Santa Fe increase its waters. It is navigable to Macuco near the plains of the separate government of *Santiago de los Atalayas,* within forty leagues of the capital of the kingdom. Its banks are still a wilderness, or inhabited by the Guahivos Indians, who have an aversion equally decided against social life and labour. They are wild without being ferocious. As little qualified to attack as to defend themselves, they preserve their independence only by flight. The traveller may then traverse their country without any risk. Seventy-five leagues before the entry of the Meta into the Oronoko, the river Casanara gives it its waters.—They are themselves, in great part, the tribute of other rivers. Proud of this acquisition, the Meta silently and majestically carries its waters to the Oronoko. She distinguishes herself from the other streams that lose their names and their waters in that river, by the silence with which she enters it. It may be said that she is the only one that introduces

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herself into the Oronoko; all the others precipitate themselves into it.

Advantages of its Navigation.

The rivers Meta and Casanara are navigable with sloops throughout the year. In the summer, that is to say, in the dry season, there are continual and fresh breezes. In the winter, calms and a strong current. They then keep nearer in with the shore; they proceed more slowly, but to the full as certainly as with the most favourable winds. These two rivers have flats, on which the vessels frequently strike; but they get them off without any injury, and almost without any trouble, because they are all sand.

The immensity and richness of the country through which the Meta runs, the great number of rivers that unite themselves with it, are so many means which Providence offers to the inhabitants of the eastern part of Santa Fe, advantageously and conveniently to get rid of their commodities; and to Spanish Guiana to augment its commerce with all the productions transportable by the river Meta. This order of things is so natural and so favourable to the two provinces, that during the little time this intercourse existed, cultivation on the uppermost banks of the Meta and Casanara was seen to take a very sensible growth; and the commerce of Guiana to acquire a consistence that carried this province by large strides towards prosperity; but, will it be believed, that the industry of which this previous intercourse was the fruit, instead of being protected by the government,

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has, on the contrary, been paralysed by its orders, on the simple representation of the merchants of Carthagena? Nothing, however, is more true!

Destroyed by the Merchants of Carthagena.

The city of Carthagena, whose cupidity led it to believe that it had an exclusive right on the commercial articles of the kingdom of Santa Fe, was no sooner informed of this new vent that the inhabitants in the vicinage of the Meta and Casanara gave to the products of their activity, than she raised the greatest outcry on the violation of what she called her rights. It was represented that the city of Carthagena was lost, and that the revenue of its custom-house would be annihilated if the law did not put a check to the communication which reciprocal interest had opened between the inhabitants of the eastern part of Santa Fe and Guiana. The minister, confounding declamation with reason, and the croaking of particular interest with the voice of general benefit, ordered, that from thenceforth they should carry from the kingdom of Santa Fe by the river Meta to Guiana, no other territorial productions than flour, and some coarse cottons fabricated in those regions, and that they should take back nothing but money. This measure was a thunderbolt to these two provinces. Commerce was reduced to almost nothing, and public misery resumed the empire she was about to lose.

Results.

Were we to believe that the commerce of Cartha-

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gena gained any thing by this, we should deceive ourselves. The cultivator, divested of the motives that had made him quit his inactivity, found it more easy to recline in his hammoc, and to struggle, as before, against privations, than to fatigue himself to procure commodities, the length and expence of transporting which to Carthagena would absorb all their whole worth, and sometimes more. Thus the productions and the commerce they fed, were lost for ever. It seems to me, that I might defy the most subtle man to prove that the gain of the trade of Carthagena has not been equally prejudicial to the revenue, to cultivation, to Guiana, to the commerce of the mother country, and to public prosperity.

The inhabitants of Guiana proposed to themselves, in 1804, to communicate to the king that this disastrous regulation had been a surprise on his goodness. If they take care to annex to their memorial a map of the country, the text alone of their request will suffice to insure it success.

At this day, they no longer carry to Guiana, by the river Meta, any thing but hammocs, mourning veils, coverlids, and other coarse articles in cotton, flour, and a little sugar, without being in sufficient quantity to export the least particle. The agents in this mournful commerce are paid in money, which they have not permission to employ even in the iron implements of husbandry. Let us return to the Orono-ko, now enriched with the waters of the Meta. Thirty leagues lower, the Sinaruco empties itself into this river from the west, after having traversed about fifty leagues through a country, of which no one demands

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the productions. Only fifteen leagues more, and we shall enjoy the sight which the entry of the Apura into the Oronoko affords.

The river Apura.

The river Apura takes its source in the mountains neighbouring to St. Christopher, a dependency of the kingdom of Santa Fe. It has a course of one hundred and seventy leagues, of which forty is from the north to the south-west, and the rest from the west to the east; then it directs itself to the south to meet the Oronoko. It is navigable more than sixty leagues, and in its course augments the body of its waters by those of an infinity of other rivers, some of which are equally navigable, and so much the more useful, that after having watered a great part of the province of Venezuela, they serve for the transport of those very articles that owe their existence to them. These rivers are, Tinaco, St. Charles, Cojeda, Agoablanca, Acarigoa, Ara, Yarno, Hospina, Maria, the Portuguese, Guanara, Tucupido, Bocono, Masparo, the Yuca, St. Domingo, Paguey, Tisnados, &c. They successively blend their waters in the immense plains of Venezuela. They almost all unite above San Jayme, and form a large body of water, which, at twelve leagues below, throws itself into the Apura, at the distance of twenty leagues to the north of the Oronoko. This quantity of water, not capable of being contained in the bed of the Apura, is forced to divide itself into many branches, and to enter the Oronoko by a number of mouths. That, however, does not

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prevent its entering it with a pride that gives it its importance. The Apura has rather the air of coming to dispute with the Oronoko its precedence, than of paying tribute to it. It seems averse to mingling its waters with those of that river, into which it precipitates itself with a terrifying impetuosity. The shock is so violent, that the agitation is felt to the very middle of the river, and even at that distance, the swell, the eddies, and the whirlpools, put the navigator in danger.

From the mouth of the Apura, the Oronoko is bounded on the north by the province of Venezuela, then by that of Cumana quite to the sea.

The Cattle raised on its Banks.

Upon the banks of the Apura and the other rivers, whose names it takes away in taking their waters, there are numberless commons, the animals of which are very much esteemed. They are composed of beeves, horses, and mules, but principally of these last. Their natural exportation is by Guiana, on account of the advantage the country affords of giving them the same feed to the very mouth of the Oronoko. All that portion of Venezuela which at the present day forms the new province of Varinas, and all the southern part of the province of Venezuela itself, are invited, by the facility of transportation, to send their commodities to Guiana, instead of carrying on the backs of mules to Caraccas or Porto-Cavello, their coffee, their cotton, and their indigo, and travelling a hundred leagues on roads almost impassable, and

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intersected by rivers that frequently overflow their banks. The intercourse between the province of Varinas, and that of Guiana, is not so much pursued as the nature of things would seem to point out, because the city of St. Thomas having hardly any cash, and scarcely ever any vessels from Europe, the cultivator still finds, in the price for his articles at the ports of Venezuela, the focus of the commerce of the mother country, a compensation for the expence and difficulties inseparable from the long and laborious journey to Caraccas and Porto-Cavello.

From the junction of the river Apura with the Oronoko, to St. Thomas, is reckoned eighty leagues. In all this space no other rivers of consequence empty themselves into the Oronoko than those of Caura and Caucapana: it is true, that from its source it receives almost all its rivers by the left bank; and after the Apura it receives others, that for the future assure to Guiana, all the commerce of the southern plains.

The navigation of all the upper part of the Oronoko is far from being as easy and certain as the magnitude of the river might induce us to suppose; interspersed with islands that obstruct its channel, and which throw the bed of it sometimes on the right bank, sometimes on the left, filled with rocks of every size and of every height, some of which are consequently on a level with the water, and some at a depth more or less disquieting according to the season; subject to dreadful gusts of wind, the Oronoko permits itself to be navigated only by good pilots, and vessels of a peculiar construction, and of a certain size. All this relates only to the navigation

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that is commenced at the port of Guiana to ascend the Oronoko, or at the mouth of the Meta, to descend to the capital; for it appears to me to be a part of my task to render further details on the navigation of the mouths of the Oronoko as far as to St. Thomas, than I have given of that of the interior, inasmuch as this is less brisk, and more familiar to those who are interested in performing it.

Mouths of the Oronoko.

The Oronoko, at nearly forty leagues from the sea, forms, like the Nile, a kind of fan, strewed over with a multitude of little islands, that divide it into a number of branches and channels, and force it to discharge itself through this labyrinth into the sea, by an infinity of mouths situated to the north and the south, occupying an extent of more than sixty leagues.—These islands multiply themselves on the coast in such a manner that the mouths of the Oronoko are very numerous, while those that are navigable are very few. They reckon about fifty mouths, and only seven capable of receiving vessels, provided they be of a large burthen. The venturous navigator, who should enter the Oronoko by a mouth not navigable, would pay dear for his imprudence; he would either be shipwrecked, or lost in the innumerable channels formed in every direction by the Garaunos islands, or perish by hunger, or fall a prey to the savage Indians who inhabit those very isles, among whom he would find but a very disagreeable, perhaps a fatal hospitality.

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We may judge of the care and skill which the navigation of the Oronoko requires at its mouth, by what daily happens to the Goaraunos Indians themselves. Born among the mouths of the Oronoko, living only by a fishery that obliges them incessantly to navigate in the openings and inlets of the islands they exclusively possess and inhabit, they ought always to know exactly where they are; yet these very men, amphibious, as one may say, frequently lose themselves, and are compelled to seek for the current, that they may let it carry them to sea, in order to enter, after discovering where they are, by the channel that is adapted for their return. I say seek for the current, and this would seem a paradox, did I not apprise the reader that there is a certain skill necessary to discover it, which the Indians alone, in a kind of pre-eminence possess. These channels, formed by that immensity of isles, are so numerous, and have such various directions, that for the most part, no current is to be perceived; in others, the eddies and winds establish false currents, which carry you up, instead of down the river. The use of the compass, itself, does not always, when you are once lost, secure you from wandering for several days among the Goaraunos islands, and, in consequence, making a circuit round them, from returning to the very point from whence you set out, believing the whole time, that you are either ascending or descending.

All these circumstances evince the necessity there is of having a good pilot on board, in order either to enter or go out of the Oronoko.

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The first of the seven navigable mouths is at twelve leagues to the south of the embouchure of the river Guarapicha, in the province of Cumana. It is one of those rivers that discharge their waters into the Gulph of Paria. They call this mouth the *Grand Manamo*, to distinguish it from the little *Manamo*, which comes almost to the sea in the same channel, and is perfectly navigable, but only with small vessels.

The second mouth is at two leagues to the south-east of the preceding. It is called the channel of *Pedernales*, and comes from the east of the island Guarisipa. It throws itself into the sea three leagues south-west of the isle of Soldiers, situated at the southern entrance of the gulph of Paria. This channel is navigable only by canoes, or at most, small craft.

The third mouth is that denominated Capara; it is a branch of the channel of Pedernales, from which it separates itself at seven or eight leagues from the sea. Its embouchure is the most southern part of the gulf of Paria, eight leagues more south than that part of Pedernales. The navigation can but seldom be carried on by the Capura, except in canoes or small craft.

The name of the fourth mouth is Macareo; it discharges itself into the sea six leagues to the south of that of Capura. It serves for the communication of Guiana with Trinidad, and every thing concurs to exclusively assure it this advantage. It is navigable for schooners and brigs; its channel is extremely clear and straight; its source opposite the point and river Erin of Trinidad.

The fifth mouth is little frequented; first, because

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it does not offer very easy navigation; next, because it has on its bank savage Indians more ferocious than the Goanauros, whom there is more inducement to avoid than to seek. This nation of Indians is called *Mariusas*, and gives its name to the fifth embouchure of the Oronoko. It is at twelve leagues, and in the most southern part, from the fourth. Between the mouth of Mariusas and the sixth, there are a number of inlets from the sea, which it is practicable to go up with the tides and inundations.

Eight leagues to the south of the Mariusas is found the sixth navigable mouth of the Oronoko. It is a branch of the Mariusas that issues from the great bed of the Oronoko. This mouth is rarely entered, as a practice of many years gives no encouragement of conquering its difficulties.

At length, eight leagues more to the south, is what they call the great mouth of the Oronoko. It is, according to the order I have observed, the seventh. It bears the name of the "*Ship's Mouth*," because it is the only one by which vessels of two or three hundred tons can enter. Its width is six leagues, but it wants a great deal of being of an equal depth.

It is time that we should enter the Oronoko, and make all those remarks which can throw a light on the navigation of this magnificent river. We shall give the preference to the Ship's Mouth, because it is generally by this, that the vessels which trade with Guiana ascend or descend.

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Navigation of the Mouth of the Oronoko, to St. Thomas.

This entrance of the Oronoko is formed by the point of Barima to the south-south-east, situated in eight degrees forty-five minutes of north latitude, and the isle of Cangrejos to the north-west of the point. It is near ten leagues from one point to the other; but the navigable channel is not quite three leagues wide. Its depth on the bar, which is a little more advanced into the sea than point Barima, has seventeen feet at low water.

As soon as the bar is passed, there are four or five fathoms on the side of the island of Cangrejos, while on that of Barima there is not more than one and a half. The shoals of Cangrejos stretch seven leagues into the sea. Those of point Barima do not extend more than two leagues.

Near a league from point Barima there is a river of the same name that discharges itself into the Oronoko. It is entered by a narrow channel one fathom and a half deep, that runs north-west. On the same south bank of the Oronoko, and at two leagues above the river Barima, is seen the mouth of the river Amaruco, which traverses a large part of the most eastern position of Guiana, occupied by the missions of the Catalonian Capuchins. Sloops may with ease navigate this river for ten or twelve leagues inland. It is to the south of the island, and of the point of Cangrejos, that forms, as we have just said, the north side of the Ship's Mouth.

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Three leagues above the island of Cangrejos, is met the island of Arenas, small, and of a sandy soil. It is covered with twelve or fifteen feet of water in high tides. On its southern part, it has a channel which from the sand of which it is formed is rendered very uncertain. One does not ascend half a league before one finds one's self between the two points that the Spaniards call *Gordas*, (Big). That on the north side has a flat, which runs out a little, but not enough to inconvenience the navigation.

In running along the south bank of the Oronoko, at eight leagues above Barima, is seen the river Aratura. It has its source on the southern bank of the hills of Itamaca, and bounds the savannas of the missions. Its mouth is very narrow, but that does not hinder it from being navigable about ten leagues. It communicates by different arms with the Amaruco, to the east, and the river Aguirra to the west. On its banks are found a great deal of wood for building and cabinet work, and opposite its embouchure some little islands that bear its name. On the side opposite the Oronoko, that is to say, on the north bank, is the channel that they name the Cocuina. It discharges itself into the sea.

At the distance of eleven leagues above Barima is the isle of Pagayos, in the middle of the Oronoko, but rather nearer to its right bank; its soil is a white mud, covered with oziers. It is overflowed by the tides about eleven feet. It is remarked that it was formerly much larger, and that it diminishes sensibly.

No sooner is the island of Pagayos passed than that of Juncos is met with. It is the most eastern of

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the chain of the isles of Itamaca which occupy in the Oronoko a space of eight leagues. They divide the river into two branches; that on the south is called the branch of the Itamaca; that on the north, of Zacoopana. They are both navigable, but that on the south, though much wider, has much less water. It is by this last large vessels at all times of the year pass. Exactitude of description demands that we should begin to ascend the arm of Itamaca as far as the west point of the chain of islands, and that we should then do as much by the branch of Zacoopana.

The island of Juncos forms with the point Barima Zanica, which advances on the right bank of the Oronoko, the eastern entrance of the Itamaca branch, which is nine hundred toises wide. At this same point Barima Zanica there separates a channel, called Carapo. It runs inland, and unites itself on the back of the hills of Itamaca to the river Aratura.

In ascending a little more we find the mouth of the river Aguirra. It rises in the territory of the missions of the Catalonian Capuchins, and descends by the hills of Itamaca. Its waters appear black in the bed of the river, but they are very clear in a glass or other vessel. Its embouchure is very wide; it has a depth of three fathoms at the distance of ten or twelve leagues from the Oronoko. Its navigation becomes worse than it was; for heretofore schooners and brigs entered it; at present a vessel larger than a shallop would have much difficulty in navigating it.—Very slight preparations would doubtless suffice to render it as navigable as it could ever have been. It wants only that interest should command them; but

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as it traverses no cultivated country, the utility of its navigation is entirely confined to those who go in quest of the timber on its banks. The trees through which it passes are so lofty, that they render the use of sails impossible. It is navigated only with the tide.

Let us continue our route, and we shall see at two leagues from the mouth of the river Aguirra, and in the middle of the Oronoko, the little island of Venado, which we leave on our right. It does not furnish matter for one observation. We shall keep, consequently, near the south bank of the Oronoko, to examine, eight leagues above the Aguirra, the channel of Caruzina. It issues from the Oronoko, runs by the backs of the mountains, from thence turns to the south-east, so as to form with a part of the south side of the river, an island in which the Goaraunos Indians have established a hamlet dependent on the Captaincy of the Indian Gemericabe. This channel has a good deal of water at its entrance, but the point of the chain of the Itamaca hills contracts and obstructs it so much for half a league, that it is almost useless for navigation. It is subdivided to almost infinity, and by this means it could be of great benefit to agriculture. The country it runs through in various directions has the advantage of being sufficiently elevated not to fear inundations. A continual verdure is there beheld, an unequivocal symptom of fertility. The Spaniards, little enthusiastic in the vegetable kingdom, have for the soil, that the ramifications of the channel of Caruzina irrigate, a sentiment of predilection that has lately induced them to conceive the pro-

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ject of expelling from it the Goaraunos Indians, of founding villages there, and placing batteries for the defence of the Oronoko.

What the south side of the Oronoko offers remarkable, after the channel of Caruzina, is the river Itamaca. Let us repair to it, recollecting that we are always running along the isles of Itamaca, which continue on our north. The mouth of the Itamaca is narrow, but deep. It carries from sixteen to eighteen feet of water. Opposite this mouth, the Oronoko has, under water, a bank that stretches itself out, and crosses even all the arm of Itamaca, excepting a very narrow passage, which requires from the navigator some caution, especially at low water. The Itamaca, six leagues from its embouchure divides itself into two branches; the first goes to the west, and enters the valleys out of which rises the mountain; the other goes to the Savanna, near the mission of Palomar. Schooners and boats can ascend the river to the very place where it branches off.

From the river Itamaca, we have but two leagues to go to arrive at the west point of the Itamaca island; that is to say, to have traversed the whole branch of that name. The arm of Zacoopana being equally entitled to description, I re-descend the river Oronoko to the point where the two branches re-unite, and I shall re-ascend by going round the isle of Juncos, and leaving it on my left.

From the east point of the isle of Juncos there runs out a flat which stretches to the north, and leaves for navigation only a very narrow channel, but deep ves-

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sels, in passing, ought to keep close in with the north side.

Within the east point of the island of Juncos, is the island of Pericos, which has very lately disappeared. It formed two channels, that on the south was almost choaked up by the sands; that on the north, though narrow, afforded a passage, though with considerable difficulty to vessels. If they did not ground, they often touched. This island, small and sandy, was seen in the tides and rise of the Oronoko. No earthquake, no extraordinary inundation has occasioned its disappearance.

Four leagues above the point where the isle of Pericos was, is seen the island of Hogs, which we leave to the right, because it inclines to the north. The navigable channel is on the south. It has, however, between it and the land, a narrow channel through which small vessels are able to pass.

A league to the west of the isle of Hogs is seen on the north bank of the Oronoko the channel of Laurent from the embouchure of which runs a flat that occupies half the channel of Zacoopana. The channel of Laurent has a mouth that gives it the appearance of a large river, but at a very little distance to the north it forms so many narrow straights, and of so little depth, that there is only one through which small vessels can go out to sea. This channel bears the name of a French captain, who without sufficient local information entered it with his vessel. He soon found himself embarrassed in the midst of all these channels, and ended by not knowing where he was. Providence, however, so ordained, that in conse-

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quence of turnings and windings, he regained the channel of Zacoopana. At the entrance of that of Laurent there is a little island of the same name, from whence there comes out a flat that runs into the mouth of the Mateo which intersects the arm of Itamaca.

The island of Mosquitos, situated near the south side is remarkable only because it has, at its two points of east and west, shoals which extend more than a league. In the middle of the river is the channel, half a league wide.

From the mouth of the channel Abacuyo, a shallow extends quite to the isle of Palomes. On the north side and opposite are two channels that run to the sea. Another shallow runs from the island of Palomes, and does not stop till it meets the west point of the Itamaca islands.

We have only to speak of the isle of Zacoopana, to have communicated on the channel of that name, ideas similar to those which we have given on the channel of Itamaca. At the mouth of the channel of the island of Zacoopana commences a shoal that extends itself two leagues west, and often occupies the half of the river. Between this shoal and another that runs from the isle of Palomes is the channel through which vessels ought to pass without leaving the centre towards either one or the other bank; for they would run the risk of being stranded.

Here the Oronoko, or to speak more accurately, that part which discharges itself into the sea by the ship's mouth, forms only one bed for eight leagues to the west. In this space is seen, on the south

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bank, the mouth of a lake, a little distance from the river. It extends quite to the foot of the mountain of Piacoa. One sees also, and almost at the same time, from the middle of the Oronoko, the hills of Meri to the south.

We arrive at the chain of islets which divide the channel of Piacoa and the river. It extends twelve leagues from the east to the west; but let us turn our eyes to the north bank and we shall see the mouth of the little Paragoan, from whence a flat runs which reaches quite to that of the great Paragoan. The two channels denominated Paragoans unite before arriving at the sea.

Above the great Paragoan, the arm detaches itself known by the name of the mouth of Pedernales, which the Oronoko has opened on the side of Trinidad. It forms a variety of channels by which they come from the Oronoko to this island. It branches from the Oronoko one league from the east point of Yaya. There is in this place a shoal that occupies half the river.

You have scarcely ascended a league and a half before you find yourself off the red bogs. It is the first place where, ascending the Oronoko, you see Terra-Firma, and lands secure from inundation. The soil is firm and red. Opposite is a shoal that extends itself along the south side, nearly half a league east and west. The passage for vessels is, in this place, close in with the two banks. It is better on the north than the south; for this last has but little water. In the midst of these bogs is a very narrow channel, named Guaritica, by which, in high tides, or when

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the river rises, shallops may go to a lake that is very near it. On the borders of this lake are seen bananas and fruit trees, which the Indians formerly cultivated on this spot.

We have to ascend only one league to find, on the same north bank, the mouth of the channel of Goaroapo. In the summer it has so little water that shallops can scarcely pass it. Yet there are some years in which it affords enough for sloops and schooners to go there in pursuit of the contraband trade in mules, cattle, and other productions coming from the provinces of Cumana and Venezuela, giving dry goods in exchange. After having passed the mouth, all the rest of the channel has a great depth. Large vessels navigate it with facility, but by oars or towing; for the high mountain on the side of which it is situated, renders it impossible to profit by the bounty of the winds. Two leagues above Goaroapo is the island of Araya; it runs along the north side, and is of a moderate size.

Towards the south side are seen the cascades of Piacoa. They are formed by three or four falls from the middle of the south side of the channel, but there is water enough on the north to afford a passage for large vessels. It is on this side that heretofore were the missions of Piacoa, and the Catalonian capuchins. One finds here excellent pasture, very fertile lands, good water, regular breezes, and a situation adapted to an agricultural people.

After having perceived the three islets of Aruba, the island of Iguana is seen. It runs along the north side of the river for more than half a league. The

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bed of the river remains navigable on the south side. On that of the north there are in the summer banks of sand that leave a channel with but very little water. In the winter sloops and schooners pass easily. From the west point of the island of Iguana you have to go only one league to be off the hill of Naparema. It is only a high rock, and of no great magnitude. All this side quite to the islands of Iguana and Araya is full of sand banks.

The channel of Lemons which is on the south side, would not, perhaps, deserve to be mentioned, if it had not at its mouth the ruins of a little fort that bears its name. From thence is seen the island of Don Vicente; it has a shoal at the east point that crosses the channel to a little below the fortress, but in the increase of the river it occasions no inconvenience.

Behold us here at the place where stood the ancient capital of Guiana, before it was transferred to Angostura. We have now performed fifty leagues of our voyage, and there remain forty to reach St. Thomas. In removing the capital forty leagues above, the Spaniards thought it necessary to leave on the place where the ancient city was placed, the forts destined to defend Guiana. They are seen at the foot of a small mountain; one is called St. Francis, the other El Padastro. There are on one side two little lakes; one is named Zeibo; the other Baratillo. Half a league below St. Francis is the rivulet Usupamo, which near its mouth has a lake. The port of the military post has on its borders a number of rocks visible in summer, but covered during the winter.

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Near half a league above the ancient city, and in the middle of the river, is the great rock Moroceto. It is rather nearer the south than the north side.—This rock is bare in the summer, and covered with water in the winter. Not far from it is the island Mieres, half across the river. On the south side is seen the mountain of that name, and within its circumference, a little lower, that of Hache. This island forms a channel on each side. That on the north is the best and widest. Three leagues higher is seen on the south side the point of Aramaya, which is nothing more than a projecting rock that makes a breaker in the season of the floods. Opposite this same point commence the three islets of San-Miguel. They are all three of stone, with a flat shore of sand. When the river is swoln, these islands are almost covered; nothing but the highest stones are then seen.

On the other side of the river, that is to say, near its left bank, and opposite the village of San-Miguel, are seen two islands called *Chacaranday*, from the name of the wood with which they are covered. They are divided by only a very narrow channel, which is nothing but one shoal.

But let us glance our eyes over the island of Faxardo, situated in the middle of the river, nearer, however, the right, than the left bank, and opposite the mouth of the Caroni. It is three thousand toises long, by thirteen hundred and eighty-seven wide. It is subject to inundations only on the western side.—They think of making this island a military post, supported by a fort that defends the river. As this is a

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new project, it is difficult to foresee whether it will ever be executed.

River Caroni.

The river Caroni empties itself into the Oronoko, opposite the island of Faxardo. Its course is direct from south to north. Its waters appear black, because it runs over a fine black sand, excellent to dry writing; but they are clear and very good. Its visible declination, and beds strewed with rocks, give it a course equally rapid and thundering; but it is in particular about a league before reaching the Oronoko, that finding its passage obstructed by rocks, it makes terrible, but ineffectual efforts to destroy the obstacles that brave its fury, and force it to rise up in order to fall again with a noise that is heard at a very great distance. Enraged with this resistance, which it has been able to overcome only by yielding, it enters the Oronoko with an impetuosity that it is more easy to conceive than describe. With the force acquired by its body and velocity, it drives a long way back the waters of the Oronoko, with which it does not mingle its own, but at more than half a league below its mouth. This phenomenon is so much the easier to be observed as the limpidity of the Caroni distinguishes itself in the ever troubled waters of the Oronoko.

Continuation of the Navigation of the Oronoko.

On the left bank, and at a league above the isle of Faxardo, is the island of Torno. It is separated from

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the land by only a little channel; it has on the west point rocks, and a shoal that prolongs itself five leagues above.

The first object which from this point ought to fix the attention of the navigator is point Cardinal. It is on the south side, three leagues above the island Faxardo. At a quarter of a league nearly from this point there is a chain of rocks that run into the river, half-channel over, opposite Guarampo. In winter, but one of these islets, formed by these rocks, is discovered. In summer, three are seen opposite Guarampo, and on the south side there is a port named Patacon, formed by point Cardinal.

They call Guarampo an assemblage of rocks seen on the north side five leagues above the island of Faxardo. These very rocks form a port on which they bestow their name. From this port there comes out a shoal almost north and south with point Cardinal. In some places, this shoal extends into the channel. On its east point are three rocks that are covered in floods, leaving the principal channel between them, and those of the south side. Half a league from Guarampo is found, on the left bank, the island Taguache; it is a league and a half from east to west.

The island of Zeiba is on the opposite side of the river; it is four leagues long, and more than one wide. The channel that separates it from the land has very little water. In summer it is almost dry. When the river rises these two islands leave in the middle of the stream a channel for large vessels. But at every other period, there are a number of sand banks, and

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very little depth: between Terra-Firma on the north, and the island Taguache, there is a channel navigable at all seasons.

The channel, or the river of Cucazana, occupies here a place, only because at its west point, and near the land, is a shoal which does not stretch much to the west, but occupies half the river. The island of Cucazana is at the mouth of the river of the same name; it is, as it were, united with the island Taguache by a flat, which in summer leaves a number of shelves bare. From its west point there runs another inclining towards the south. It also in summer shows bare shelves.

The channel of Mamo has, at its mouth, a shoal of but little extent, in the middle of the river; and at seven leagues below the capital there is another north and south with the island of Mamo. The channel which the shoal leaves on each side has not, from the month of January to April, more than eight feet of depth. It is this that obliges the vessels to be lightened. Yet, it is but seldom, in spite of this precaution, that they can pass without touching and losing three or four days in getting off. The navigation then has inevitable expences to support, and risks more dreadful to run. In the floods these difficulties do not exist. The same thing takes place in another channel that the island of Mamo forms on the west point of Zeiba.

After having surmounted these difficulties, one sees nothing but rocks on the sides and in the stream.—The points of Currucay on the south side, and three leagues above port St. Anne, are nothing but rocks,

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forming salient angles. In the middle of the river, and almost opposite these points, is seen a great rock called the rock of Rosaire: between that and the sides there are a number of others under water in the winter. To the north of the rock of Rosaire is a channel, but very narrow, on account of the rocks which stretch themselves out, almost close to the bank. Vessels cannot pass in summer, without danger of striking on these rocks. In winter the current is very violent, and if by mischance the wind dies away in this place, you are menaced with shipwreck against the rock of Rosaire, as we have seen examples of.

The north side then offers to the view, at one league above the rock of Rosaire, a point of rocks. At some distance from thence are three reefs near one another, that extend one third across the stream north and south with the east point of the island Panapana. One of these reefs is almost north and south with the west point, and runs nearly half over the river; there are two of them covered on their sides.

The island of Panapana is one league above the point of Rabits, near the south shore, from whence it is separated by a channel of moderate width, but of little depth in summer. At each east and west point there is a shallow with very little water. That on the west point runs up more than a league, always inclining to the south. Between this island, which is a league and a half long, and the north shore, is the principal channel of the Oronoko, a little narrow, and of little depth when the waters are low. At that time the navigation is by no means convenient; but when the river rises there is no reason to have any apprehension.

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Two leagues higher you find yourself at the narrowest place on the Oronoko, named by the Spaniards Angosturita. The north and south points which form this contraction, are rocks. A little above and almost half across the river, there is an immense stone called *Lavandera*, or the washerwoman. It appears in summer, but the water covers it in the floods. Between it and the south side there is an islet of stones even with the land, opposite which the river Maruanta discharges itself.

Point Tineo to the north, is also formed by rocks that appear only when the waters are low. Point Nicasio, to the south, is in the same situation, excepting that the stones are not entirely covered.

At length we arrive at St. Thomas, the capital of Spanish Guiana, situated at the foot of a small mountain on the right bank of the river. They have built for its defence a fort placed opposite to the city and on the left bank; it is surrounded by a number of houses, dependent, like the fort, on the province of Guiana. They call this place port Raphael: it is here that the passage of communication between Guiana and the provinces of Venezuela and Cumana is. Between port Raphael and the city is seen the island called *del Medio*, or the Middle, because it is in the middle of the river. It is a rock which, on its southern part, discovers itself in summer, and is under water in floods. The principal channel is between the city and this island; when the water is low it has two hundred feet of water, and on the increase of the river fifty or sixty more.

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This appears to me to be as much information as is necessary to enable the reader to judge of the difficulties of the navigation of the Oronoko. I have preferred these details, which bear with them the marks of correctness, to a general representation of the dangers the navigator of the Oronoko has to brave. Literary experience teaches us, that in truth, the pen given up to either the coldness or the fire of imagination, is very far from containing itself within the circle of truth, in the same manner as when it has nothing but material facts to set down.

The delicious variety that the Banks of the Oronoko offer.

Nothing in the world is so calculated to captivate the admiration of the naturalist as the navigation of the Oronoko. Sometimes its banks are bordered by forests of the most majestic trees, enriched with the most exquisite underwood, and filled with birds, whose various kinds seem privileged, as well from the beauty of their plumage as the melody of their song. Monkeys of the marmoset species, such as the tamarin, the ouistiti, the saki, the marakina, the pincha, the mico, embellish this enchanting picture, by their cries, their leaps, their grimaces, their feats of agility. The savage inhabitant of these woods, and who contents himself with sharing the possession of them with the ferocious beasts, supports himself on the same fruits as the birds and the quadrupeds, without receiving or inspiring fear. At other times, the immense plains, covered with excellent pasture,

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procure the observer the pleasure of stretching his eyes, fatigued with being confined by forests, over a verdure that bounds his horizon for the space of twenty or thirty leagues. Every thing concurs to make him admire the order, the wisdom, and the harmony of nature; and man, in spite of himself, is, by this thought, elevated above himself.

Without insects, without the necessity of constantly lying upon the ground, wet or dry, and among ferocious beasts, without the danger of wanting provisions, without sands and rocks, without the caprice of the winds, the navigation of the Oronoko would be an inexhaustible source of delight for a man, the friend of nature, and the admirer of her wonders.

After having made the Oronoko known, with respect to its navigation, we still have to present to the reader the picture of the constituent peculiarities of this great river.

Importance of the river Oronoko.

The Oronoko is so little known, that it is placed almost the last in the list of great rivers, when it is doubtful whether any can bear away from it the palm of supremacy. I support this opinion by remarks carefully made by Mr. Humboldt, in 1800.

All geographers have invariably accorded to the river Amazons the honours of the largest river in the world. It is enough that the Oronoko may dispute with it this advantage, in order to render its superiority over all other rivers an historic truth. Now

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Mr. Humboldt says, in his letter written in 1800, to the captain-general of Caraccas, on his return from his voyage to the Rio-Negro; "I have compared my "measurement taken in the Oronoko, with those that "the illustrious Condamine took in the river Ama-"zons. The result is, that the mouth of the Amazons "is much wider than that of the Oronoko; but this "last merits equal consideration with regard to the "quantity of water it has in the interior of the con-"tinent; for, at two hundred leagues from the sea, "the Oronoko has a bed of from two thousand five "hundred to three thousand toises, without any "island."

Body and rapidity of its Water.

The width of the Oronoko before the capital of Guiana, is about three thousand five hundred toises. Its depth, measured at the same place, in 1734, by order of the king, was found to be sixty-five fathoms in the month of March, the period when its waters are the lowest. It discharges into the sea with such velocity and force, that its water preserves itself fresh at more than thirty leagues from its mouth, and at more than forty it is distinguishable from that of the sea.

Its annual Rise.

The Oronoko experiences, like the Nile, and other great rivers, an annual and periodical rise. It regularly commences with the month of April, and

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finishes with the month of August. The Oronoko remains all the month of September with the same quantity of water it has acquired in the five preceding months. It is then that it presents a spectacle truly worthy of admiration. With this increase of power, it overleaps its natural limits, and makes incursions from twenty to thirty leagues in the southern regions, which it occupies from east to west more than two hundred leagues, as if the whole of this extent was united to its domain; the whirlpools, eddies, and falls resulting from the inequalities of the land over which the torrent passes, and the new sea that covers the surface of the plains, are so many objects capable of exciting the most senseless imagination.

The ordinary rise of the Oronoko, before St. Thomas, is thirteen fathoms. It is greater in proportion as it approaches the sea, and it is perceptible at three hundred and fifty leagues from its mouth. It is not every year equal; but the difference never exceeds a fathom. They pretend, in the country, that there is every twenty-five years, another extraordinary rise of another fathom.

In the first of October the Oronoko begins to fall. Its waters insensibly abandon the plains, and return to their beds. A multitude of rocks and islands discover themselves in its bosom, and by the end of February it finds itself at its lowest, which it preserves till the commencement of April. It is in this interval that the turtle go out of the Oronoko to deposit their eggs on the shores lately uncovered, to which the waters by remaining on them, has imparted a moisture, that, aided by the heat of the sun, power-

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fully developes every principle of fecundity. We have seen in Chapter IV. that the Indians from every part, repair with their families to the banks of the Oronoko to make by drying these turtles a durable food, and to extract from their eggs an oil, which they either consume or sell.

The waters of the Oronoko are drinkable; they even find in them medicinal qualities, the principal of which is to disperse wens.

Tides.

The tide, very strong at the mouths of the Oronoko, experiences so many subdivisions in the number of channels that it enters, that it is almost imperceptible before St. Thomas. It flows as high as that, only in the summer, and when the wind is from the sea.—The navigator pays little attention to it.

The Oronoko is extremely full of fish. The kinds vary to infinity; and by their abundance amply compensate those who make fishing their principal occupation.

The fish there have not a perfect identity with those of Europe, though they give to some the names our fishes bear. This arises rather from the resemblance they bear to those, than because they are absolutely believed to be of the same kind.

I shall dispense with giving the list of all the fishes found in the Oronoko, because they require a description appertaining more to the naturalist than to the historian. I shall make no exception but in favour of those the Spaniards call *curbinata* and *caraibe*.

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The first is a fish the largest of which does not weigh more than two pounds. It abounds in the Oronoko, and is of an excellent flavour. But it is less appreciated for its nutritive virtue, than for two stones lodged in the head, in the place the brain ought to occupy. They each have the shape of an almond without the shell, and the brilliant colour of mother of pearl. These stones are bought for their weight in gold, on account of their specific quality against a retention of urine. It is sufficient to take three grains finely powdered in a spoonful of wine or water, to cause an instant discharge of urine: an over dose relaxes the muscles, and occasions an inability of urinary retention.

The second, smaller than the curbinata, attacks with the utmost ferocity, every animal, whether alive or dead, that falls within its reach. It is peculiarly inimical to the legs of the persons who cross some branches of the Oronoko. Its bite is severe. Did its strength correspond with its fury, it would occasion frequent misfortunes. But they guard against its attacks, and are always able to check the progress of its bite. The name of caraibe was given to it on account of its carnivorous disposition.

I shall not pass so slightly over the amphibious animals seen in the Oronoko. The peculiarities that appear to me to distinguish them from those of Europe compel me to give a description of them.

Cayman.

The cayman, which many naturalists confound with the alligator and the crocodile, is nevertheless

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very different from these two species of the *encyclopedic methodique*, as the abbè Bonaterre has judiciously observed. Larger than the crocodile, and even than the alligator, the cayman is also more heavy and dull. To be more dangerous than the crocodile, he only wants to know better how to use his strength.

The cayman of the Oronoko, like all those of his species, has the appearance of a lizard of from fifteen to eighteen feet. His mouth is extremely wide, is furnished with a row of fangs and of teeth, a little separated one from another. His projecting eyes, which he keeps on the surface of the water, give him an opportunity of seeing every thing without being seen. His skin is covered with strong scales and points, against which a ball is ineffectual. He is the destroyer of fish, and terror of men. The Indians eat his flesh, which is white, but of a faint taste. They take the cayman with large spears and hooks. His fangs serve as ornaments of the Indian dress; they are placed round the neck and arms.

The common tradition among the Indians of Terra-Firma and the Oronoko is, that the cayman and tiger engage in frequent combats. The tiger quits the thickets of his forest, and walks along the banks of the rivers where the cayman is accustomed to enjoy the sun. He watches the movements of the cayman he perceives. As soon as he sees an opportunity of surprising him, or that he sleeps, he springs immediately upon him. He fastens himself with his talons on his hard and impenetrable shell. If the cayman is young, he is lost; if strong, he instantly flings himself into the water, and drowns the tiger;

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then takes him in his fangs, and devours him on the shores of the river. The cayman eats only on land, because, having neither tongue nor gills, he cannot swallow in the water.

The teeth of the cayman pass among the Indians of the Oronoko for an antidote to poison, and an alexipharmic; but it is more generally acknowledged that the fangs and limbs of the cayman, pulverized and administered in doses of twelve grains of one or the other, or six of each, are an excellent antispasmodic: the remedy is repeated as occasion may require. They say that a drop of its gall on the lachrymal point, destroys by its antiopthalmic virtue, cataracts and films. It at first causes a burning, but that soon ceases.

The fat of the cayman put warm into the ears, possesses the virtue of removing obstructions in the auditory channels. It produces the same effect on the mesenteric veins. This is the reason it is given to those who eat earth. The dose is a spoonful in any mucilaginous liquid.

The Iguana.

The Iguana (Guana) is very common on the Oronoko. It is a lizard of two and a half feet long, of a greenish colour; it has on the back a row of points like the cayman, which gives it a horrid appearance. It is very often on shore on the trees. Fear makes it always fly into the water. Its meat is thought as good by the Indians and Spaniards, as that of a pullet.—The female Iguana lays from twenty-five to thirty

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eggs, at one time, about the size of a nut. They are yellow and covered with a thin skin or membrane that serves as a shell. They are dressed like the eggs of fowls, and are eaten as a greater delicacy. They find in some iguanas a stone about the bigness of a turkey's egg. It is white, soft, and enveloped in a number of cuticles, like the coats of an onion.—The powders made of it are powerfully diuretic, and lithotriptic.

Chiquira.

In the Oronoko and other rivers of Terra-Firma, is an amphibious animal which the Caribs call *capigua;* the Palanaques and *Cumanagotos* Indians, *Chiquira,* and the Spaniards, *quadratinejas.* It has the nose of a sheep, red hair, and a tail so short that it hardly appears. They eat it on fast days, because it lives as much in the water as on land. These animals swim in shoals, and come up from time to time to breathe. They feed on the grass that grows on the borders of the rivers and lakes. It is there that the Indians wait for them with their arrows, for they are passionately fond of their flesh.

The Lapa.

In Guiana they call by this name an amphibious animal, named by the Indians *tamenu.* It is of the size of a terrier dog. Its hair is red, dotted with white spots. It has the grunt of the paca of Mr. Buffon.—Its flesh is tender and like that of a roasting pig.—

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The lapa, in fact, in all the feasts of Southern America to the north of the line, makes as distinguished a figure as the roasting pig in ours. The lapa in general lives on the banks of the rivers, where it feeds on grass and fruit. It is so wild that at the least noise it throws itself into the water.

The Water-dog.

The animal of the otter genus, called by the Spaniards the water-dog, resembles very much the beaver. Its head is like that of a small dog; its ears exactly those of the beaver; its tail long; its fore feet like those of the fox, but larger; its hind feet flat and webbed. Its hair soft and of a whitish colour. It lives in holes that it makes on the edge of the water. It often walks in the fields. It feeds on grass, fruit, and even fish, which it catches with inconceivable dexterity.

Liron.

The little animal which, in Southern America, bears the name of liron, has almost all the characteristics of the sariga, only that it is amphibious. It is on that account that it is called the little water-dog. It is a lovely little animal that lives in the rivers and pools. Its skin is covered with short hair, very soft and of extraordinary beauty. Its colour is white and black, so disposed, that beginning with the head, it forms a ribbon of black hair, which shows itself in the shape of a semicircle, and then at the distance

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of two fingers, forms another, then a third and a fourth, &c. As its radii are black on a white ground, they contribute very much to the beauty of the animal. Its little head is like that of the dormouse, with the whiskers of a cat. Its feet are webbed; its tail is very striking, and perfectly without hair from the middle to its extremity.

The belly of this animal is split entirely down, and divided into two long strips of skin which it opens and can shut so hermetically, that the division is hardly to be perceived. These strips are lined with a soft and thick short hair. It is with them that the female covers as many as six little ones, which she carries under this thin cuticle.

Manati.

The Indians and Spaniards of Terra-Firma call by the name of *manati*, what we name the *lametin*. It is a species of marine cow, more aquatic than terrestrial; but its custom of going on shore, to crawl amongst and feed on grass, has caused it to be placed among the number of amphibious animals.

The manati of the Oronoko is of a frightful figure, and without any proportion. Its bulk is nearly that of an ox, which it resembles a little in its mouth, and habit of ruminating the grass on which it feeds. Its eyes are very small; its gills scarcely perceptible; it has no fins, and is therefore frequently obliged to leave the water for the purpose of respiration. Its skin is much thicker than that of an ox. They make thongs of it to tie their cattle, and for horsewhips.

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Its tail forms a circle from the right to the left part of its body, and gives it nearly three feet of diameter. It has on its breast two little irregular arms, without any division of finger or nails, which it uses to go and graze. It is at these times that the tigers have a good bargain of it. The female carries under its arms its two little ones, most frequently male and female. She presses them against her stomach, and nourishes them with a rich milk till they are able to accompany her to graze.

The meat of the manati is fat, good, and tender; the greater part converts itself into a grease that is very good to burn. The use of this meat destroys all venereal taints. The lump that grows on the nape of its neck has the consistence of bone or ivory. Its powder is excellent in stopping the bloody flux.

The manati fishery is carried on by the Indians in the same manner as that of the whale at Spitsberg, with this difference, that one Indian, with his wife, goes in his canoe to the manati fishery.

Importance of Guiana.

It is difficult to find in all the Spanish dominions a possession so favoured by nature and so little appreciated as Guiana. Its extent, which they reckon a thousand leagues in circumference, gives it the importance of an empire. Its soil, whose only fault is a too active vegetation, would yield more articles than all the other Spanish possessions now produce. The rivers, that the Oronoko in its course of five hundred

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leagues receives, and the number of which exceeds three hundred, are so many canals that would carry to Guiana all the riches they themselves might have contributed to obtain from the earth. The Oronoko, which traverses it, and which is itself the opening by which an enemy might penetrate into the provinces of Venezuela, Varinas, and the kingdom of Santa-Fe, can be defended only by Guiana, which must, of course, become the bulwark of the provinces she alone can guarantee.

How is it that a country industry ought to prefer to every other is a desert? How, that a military station, so advantageous, has obtained no more attention from its government?

To the first of these two questions, one may answer at once, that the Spanish population in America, possessing a hundred times more land than it can cultivate, has no motive to go in search of any other at a distance: besides, the Spaniard, not devoured by an ambition which he cannot gratify but with the sweat of his brow, and who immediately takes root in the spot, good or bad, where fate has fixed him, cannot resolve on abandoning the place where he has procured himself ease, and acquired habits, and run after an opulence that he can do without, or expose himself to fatigues, the very idea of which frightens him.

The second question can hardly be solved, but by the great expence fortifying and garrisoning Guiana would demand, unless the government reposing on the difficulties and dangers presented by the navigation of the Oronoko, believes that no nation would undertake the conquest of an uncultivated country,

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which its actual misery defends better than arms.—Woe to Guiana, if the indolence of the government is occasioned by such a system as condemns it for ever to the most afflicting nullity! But the wise policy, for a long time the base of all the operations of the Spanish ministry, assure us that it is impossible with justice to attribute to it ideas so opposite to public prosperity. It is in this persuasion, that I am about to add to the information I have already given on Guiana, all those which policy, cultivation, and commerce can reasonably desire.

Extent and Population of Guiana.

Spanish Guiana, from the mouths of the Oronoko to the limits of the river Portuguese, occupies a space of more than four hundred leagues. Its width in the first eighty leagues to the east, is not more than thirty leagues south, where it is bounded by the possessions of the Dutch, but then its breadth increases to more than a hundred and fifty leagues.

Upon this immense surface, it has but thirty-four thousand inhabitants of all conditions and all colours, of which nineteen thousand four hundred and twenty-five Indians are under the conduct of the missionaries; six thousand five hundred and seventy-five in the capital; and the remaining eight thousand in the other villages. The thickest population is from fifty leagues from the sea, to a hundred and thirty leagues up the Oronoko.

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Lower Guiana.

Guiana is divided into the upper and lower Oronoko, and the capital is adopted as the point of division. But this honour would more justly belong to the river Caroni, because it bounds on all the western part, a territory that might properly be called an island; for it has the Oronoko to the north; the sea to the east; the river Essequibo to the south; and the Caroni to the west. It forms almost a square of seventy leagues from east to west, and thirty leagues in its least breadth from north to south. America has few lands more fertile than those within this circumference. Watered by a number of rivers, which for ages have augmented the bed of mould, they reproach man for his indolence and sloth.

The missionaries charged with conducting the Indians by the paths of christianity to social life, commenced their labours in this part of Guiana. Twenty-seven villages founded to the east of the river Caroni attest the success of the fathers, the Catalonian capuchins. Yet they have not penetrated more than thirty leagues from the coast, because it is inhabited by the Caribs, the most ferocious and courageous of all the Indians, who have on all occasions made martyrs of the apostles who have attempted to make christians of them. It is true that the ferocity of the Caribs would undoubtedly have given way to the morality of the missionaries, had they been left to the pure impulse of their own hearts: but the Dutch of Surinam, interested in extending their commerce in

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Spanish Guiana, have made it a point of policy to protect the vagabond existence of the Caribs, who interdict to the Spaniards all approach from the coasts. It is, in fact, certain, that Spanish Guiana, which on the map appears to occupy thirty leagues of coast from the mouths of the Oronoko to Cape Nassau, does not occupy one inch; for the natives have defended their independence, so that having never been converted, reduced, nor vanquished, they are, in law and in fact, as free as they were before the discovery of the new world. It is melancholy, that the barbarous use they make of their liberty obliges philosophy itself to offer up wishes that they may lose, rather than preserve it.

Connections of the Caribs with the Dutch.

The Dutch court with a great deal of earnestness the friendship and alliance of the Caribs. They obtain it with so much the more facility, as they do not preach to them the inconvenient morality of the Spaniards, but make, on the contrary, an apology for their manners and habits. It is asserted that in these political relations they do not fail to nourish the hatred of the Caribs against the Spaniards, and to attach them to themselves by the bands of interest; and nothing can better prove their success than the permission the Caribs have given them to establish on their territory, on the borders of the sea, a guard post, where they have six Dutch soldiers and a serjeant. This post is destined to protect the contraband trade that the Dutch carry on upon these coasts.

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The Caribs, far from creating any obstacle, buy and consume what the Dutch bring, or go and resell it to the Indians of the missions, or assist the Batavian pedlars, who wish to increase their profits by retailing their articles for themselves. The commercial intercourse between the Dutch and the Caribs is very much followed, and more interesting than it should seem it could be with savages, to whom cultivation has not one attraction. But the Dutch point out to them the balsams, the oils, the gums, the resins, the medicinal plants, the fruits, the woods that are fit for commerce, and it is with these articles that all their exchanges are made. If there remains any balance in favour of the Dutch, the Caribs pay it with the Indians called *Poytos*, whom they take prisoners in their wars, and the Dutch purchase to make slaves.

Political relations between the Dutch of Surinam and the Spaniards of Guiana.

Much more vigilance and inquietude is perceived in the Dutch for the protection of their possessions, than the Spaniards manifest for theirs. For these last have no advanced post on the Dutch boundary, while the Hollanders have first, on the coast, a fort on the guard post we have just mentioned; then they occupy a fort called the old castle, at the junction of the river Mazurini with the Essequibo, and maintain an advanced guard of from twenty to five and twenty men, on the river Cuyuni. By means of these precautions, they are not only respected on their own territories, but they even traverse in safety

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all the neighbouring Spanish possessions. They even extend their limits wherever the convenience of agriculture invites them, and maintain their usurpations by force.

Every thing is therefore wanting for the Spaniards and Dutch to live in Guiana like good neighbours, whose respective mother countries are friendly nations. They mutually reproach each other with injuries, some of which are serious enough.

The Spaniards pretend that the Dutch, constantly occupied in encroaching on their territory, respect no boundaries; that they destroy the Spanish commerce in Guiana by the contraband articles they introduce; that they continually excite the Caribs against them; that they prevent their reduction by the advice they give, and the arms they furnish.

The Dutch, in their turn, impute to the Spaniards the desertion of the slaves from their possessions in Surinam, who find in Guiana a hospitable reception, liberty, and the protection of the government. It is true, that for a long time the Spaniards have favoured, rather from revenge against the Dutch than from principles of humanity, all the slaves from Surinam, who have come to ask an asylum. They have even peopled with these fugitives, two pretty considerable villages on the banks of the river Caura, where they receive also the Indians whom the Caribs force to fly in order to avoid becoming slaves to the Dutch.—From this commixture of men without manners it will be difficult at some future day, more or less remote, to prevent some inconvenience from resulting to public tranquillity.

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For seven or eight years these two governments have mutually reproached each other, and have promised by treaties to behave with the decency and respect from which they ought never to have departed. One of the promises of the Spanish government is, to restore to the Dutch all the slaves who shall withdraw themselves into the Spanish dominions, or pay their value. If this stipulation be always as faithfully executed as it is in these first moments of the compact, it will re-establish between the two countries a harmony, almost all the advantages of which appear to me necessarily to result to the Spaniards. For peace and friendship are always best adapted to him who wants power to make himself feared.

Upper Guiana.

Every thing which is to the east of the river Caroni, commencing a league above St. Thomas, depends on the mission of the Franciscans. Were we to judge of their zeal from the result of their labours, we should have no occasion to be astonished. But if we compare their works with the difficulties they had to overcome, and with the disinclination, or rather the decided repugnance of the Indians to receive the lights of the faith, we shall see that it was scarcely possible for men to do more than what the Franciscans have done on the upper banks of the Oronoko. But these missionaries as well as the Capuchins, think they have fulfilled their ministry in mechanically retaining the Indian in the appearance of civil life, and in obtaining from him the exterior and insignificant

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forms of christianity. The missionary neglects to inspire the Indian with the love of labour, at the same time that he instils into him the love of God. Provided he mumbles over his prayers at certain hours, he is dispensed from every other work. Drunkenness, lasciviousness, sleep, fill up all his leisure, that is to say, his whole time. If he cultivates a few provisions around his cot he passes for very industrious.

Cultures.

Upon the most productive land in the world, there are seen but a few plantations badly worked, situated at thirty leagues to the south of the capital of Guiana, where the proprietors raise a little cotton, some sugar, and a little country provisions. The soil is excellent, especially for tobacco. One may judge of its goodness by that cultivated on account of the king in the environs of San Antonio of Uspata, to the east of the river Caroni. Nature there produces of herself the oil of *Palma Christi*, a balsam called in the country, the butter of *Carapa*, the real *simacouba*, so efficacious in dysenteries, bark, resins, oils, balsams, and an infinity of medicinal plants.

San Thomas.

The city of San Thomas, situated on the right bank of the Oronoko, is the seat of a separate governor, with a salary of three thousand hard dollars. He enjoys all the rights and exercises all the func-

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tions that the law gives to governors: but he depends, in the military and political departments, on the captain-general of Caraccas. He is also a deputy of the intendance, and has in this capacity, the administration of the finances of his province, and orders all the ordinary expences, but is obliged to account with the intendant-general, and to execute his orders in every thing that regards finance or commerce.

The bishop of Guiana makes the capital his residence. We have spoken in Chap. IV. of the period of the erection of this bishopric, of the revenues of the bishop, and of the chapter of this cathedral, which does not as yet exist even in design. Religion has not, to speak correctly, any temple worthy of her, in Guiana. Divine offices are celebrated there in a hovel which the most insignificant village would not suffer for its parish church. It is not, however, because the bishop does not make frequent and lively representations to the government on the indispensability of an edifice, to which the name of cathedral might seriously be given, and, with the mediocrity of his rental, he can only offer wishes for the construction of a religious building, whose decency should correspond with the grandeur of the object.

The police of the capital is conducted by a common council, the only one in the province, composed of two magistrates, an *alguazil major*, an *alferez real*, and a notary. Criminal justice is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the governor.

In all the province of Guiana there are but three livings; San Thomas, St. Rose of Maruante in the east, and Caycara, a hundred leagues to the west.

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Its Climate.

We breathe at San Thomas an air tolerably healthy. The trade-winds are there very regular from the month of November to the month of May. In the rest of the year they are interrupted by calms more or less frequent, more or less long. The inhabitants are pretty well lodged. The streets are on a line and paved. The houses are for the most part built as in Caraccas, of lime and sand, with terraces on the tops, where they sleep in the seasons of their greatest heat, without receiving from the dew any injury to their health or sight. Storms are frequent in the months of August, September, and October. They have no earthquakes; but sometimes a wind, that does not last long, which blows with the violence of a hurricane; it terminates in rain.

Its Commerce.

To give a just idea of the riches or poverty of Guiana, I shall have recourse to what the tithes produce.

The tithes of all Guiana were farmed out in 1803, for four thousand hard dollars a year. Let us suppose that the farmer gained fifty per cent. and carry it to 6000: that would give an annual revenue of 60,000 hard dollars for every thing generally consumed in Guiana, or exported from it. A great deal of penetration is not necessary to estimate what remains to commerce.

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It is true, that in calculating by the tithes, the products of the herds of the capuchin missionaries do not come into the account, because they are exempt. They estimate the horned beasts alone that they possess, at a hundred and fifty thousand, which naturally make a part of the riches of Guiana.

There were, notwithstanding, exported through the port of Guiana, from 1791 to 1794, in articles coming as well from this province, as from that of Varinas, ten thousand three hundred and eighty oxen, and three thousand one hundred and forty mules; and they in return, introduced two hundred blacks, and 349,448 hard dollars in specie.

From 1791 to 1795, they exported for Europe,

in silver,	- - -	25,203 hard dollars.
In goods,	- - -	363,397
	Total,	388,600 hard dollars.

At this day the commerce is reduced to less than one half.

At the end of 1803 there were in Guiana thirty-four small vessels employed in the coasting trade in the colonies, and the trade then was in the hands of a few Catalonians, who have carried there that spirit of industry which is found in no part of Spain in the same degree as in Catalonia. The poverty of Guiana easily places very narrow limits to their emoluments; but it imposes none on their ideas, or their plans. They think, with all the other whites of Guiana, that this province has received from nature, favours which render her worthy of a better lot.

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Encouragement which industry requires.

The exertions of industry meet in Guiana an insurmountable obstacle in the difficulty of communication, as well on account of the number of rivers, with which the province is intersected in every direction, as the want of roads, and the wretched support of those that do exist. They require barges, or large ferry-boats on the rivers they are obliged to pass the most frequently, in order to afford the cultivator, at all seasons, a certainty of transport for his commodities. They require, also, a road from the capital to Cayacaca. This communication is, at the present time, very long, very difficult, and often impracticable. A second road from San Thomas to Barcelonetta, distant about four days' journey. Lastly, a third road for the village of San Antonio, forty leagues from the capital.

The inhabitants of Barcelonetta represent also, through their delegate, that the port of San Thomas experiences continual encroachments, of which it is indispensable to arrest the progress. After the long and heavy rains that soak and soften their lands, there are made by the rapidity of the current of the Oronoko, considerable encroachments, that expose their houses to be washed away, from the month of July to September. It is impossible to prevent these excavations, and preserve the city, but by the means of a solid quay in all that part called the *Almeda*.

Another work, also very useful which Guiana demands, is to blow up the large stones that prevent

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vessels from anchoring in the most convenient and safe situations. This might easily be done on the approach of the month of February, when the waters of the Oronoko, fallen thirteen fathoms, leave these stones uncovered. This operation ought to be performed at the place called *la Cucuycra*, because it is the most sheltered part of the harbour, and where vessels lose most anchors.

They demand particularly, and with importunity, that the passage at Mamo, seven leagues below the capital, should be rendered more navigable. From the month of January to April, no vessel can pass there with a cargo. Every vessel must discharge without being able to load again, but after passing this channel; for then it does not carry above seven or eight feet of water. They must deepen the bed, the depth of which every day diminishes, as well from the deposition of sand, as by the ballast a number of ships throw out, in order to lighten themselves, and be able to pass.

Of all these labours, it is not allowed me, according to my opinion on Guiana, to regard as indispensable any but those that the facility of communication by land requires. The plan I am about to unfold, renders the others less pressing, excepting, nevertheless, those of the pass of Mamo, which it is, in every situation, necessary to clear.

PLAN.—*Bad Situation of the Capital.*

The Spanish government has thought, that it accorded best with the defence of Guiana, to place the

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capital at the enormous distance of ninety leagues from the sea, and not to leave in this space any city exposed to the invasions of an enemy. It is not my business to combat this opinion, which I think foreign to my subject. It is in vain for reason to present me with arms; I renounce all use of them. I will suppose, on the contrary, that it may in fact be possible, for a city on the banks of a river to defend the entrance into a country better by leaving between it and the sea the most important part of the possession, than if it was near the sea, and that an enemy could not penetrate into the territory but after having taken it.

I do not undertake to examine the situation of San Thomas, but as it relates to agriculture, navigation, and commerce, and I maintain, under these points of view, it could never be worse situated than it now is.

In all ages reason has advised to give the preference, for the cultivation of colonial produce, to the lands nearest to the sea, or at least to navigable rivers, because the saving which results from the transportation by water, in diminishing the charge on the whole, becomes a powerful encouragement to the cultivator, and contributes also to the increase of agriculture, and the augmentation of commerce.

On this principle the lands of Guiana, between the river Caroni and the sea, are those which ought to have been cultivated the first. Excellent, as has been said, divided into immense plains, mountains, hill-sides, and valleys, every article might there find a soil and climate adapted to it, and the different rivers that enrich this part assure, in case of droughts, irri-

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gations to supply the want of rain, and a conveyance to the Oronoko without any expence.

Necessity of placing it nearer the Sea.

But it is impossible to yield to any idea of success, so long as the only city of Guiana shall be at the great distance from the sea that it now is; for if to sell their productions and purchase their necessaries the inhabitants of the part to the east of the Caroni are obliged to ascend to St. Thomas, and to expose themselves to charges, delays, and incalculable dangers for every thing they send to, or require from the capital, they will very soon, and with reason, renounce a possession which repays neither the advances nor the sweat of the brow it exacts.

If it be repugnant to cultivation that San Thomas should be placed at Angostura, navigation and commerce demand no less that it should be carried nearer the sea, or that another city be substituted in its place. The great difficulties that vessels of all sizes have to surmount in order to go as high as San Thomas have already been seen, inthe description of the Oronoko; and it has been shewn that the Spanish policy has placed it on the spot of the river so beset with rocks, shelves, andsands, that it seems as if nature wished to separate it from man, by showing it herself under the most hideous aspect.

The voyage from the ship's mouth to San Thomas is from fifteen to twenty, and even thirty days; if to this be added the time lost, and the risks ran, it will be seen that there are very few seamen who would

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not prefer sailing their vessels to Europe, to the trouble, the care, and the dangers annexed to the navigation of the Oronoko.

The exterior navigation merits, however, so much the more regard, as what would be expended in surmounting the difficulties opposed to it, is always paid by the cultivator; for the expence and dangers of navigation are always carried to account in commercial speculations, and necessarily cause in the articles a deduction fatal to local prosperity. The interior navigation being performed with shallops and canoes that no shoals can impede, it is much more suitable that it should be appropriated to transport the products to that part of the Oronoko where all sorts of sea vessels can with facility repair, than to oblige these last to ascend the stream and make the voyage longer, more expensive, and more dangerous.

It is then contrary to every principle of agricultural and commercial economy, that the only port existing in Guiana should be so buried, and so little accessible to navigation. The city of San Thomas may well remain where it is: but the drawing any advantage from this province must be renounced so long as there shall not be in the lower part of the Oronoko, and not far from its mouth, any port to receive the products of the interior, and to facilitate to vessels from sea voyages, the means of making their exchanges with more dispatch and less expence.

Where ought it to be placed?

Once agreed on that point, it remains to know what shall be the place to which the preference should

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be given. Not too much to brave the reigning opinion, I shall place the new city at the mouth of the Aguirra, twelve leagues from the ship's mouth, and upon the left bank of the river, that in the seasons of inundation the communication with the country may remain open. But one great objection presents itself; it is that this spot makes a part of the territory occupied by the Caribs, and it is indispensable that they be first reduced.

Nothing is more easy than the reduction of the Caribs, provided it be not undertaken till after they are deprived of the aid and protection of the Dutch of Surinam. That ought to be accomplished in Europe by a good and faithful treaty between the Dutch and Spanish governments, by which the Dutch shall acknowledge, as the immutable limits of the Spanish and Dutch possessions in Guiana, cape Nassau on the coast, and the river Essequibo in the interior of the country. They should oblige themselves to abandon all the posts, and withdraw all the troops, that in contempt of the original treaty, they maintain beyond these limits upon the coasts, or on the southern part of the Essequibo, and to refuse the Caribs of lower Guiana all kind of protection that might hinder or retard their reduction.

The Spaniards on their part, should promise to send back to Surinam *gratis*, every runaway slave, and even every refugee freeman whom the government shall claim, and to live in peace and good fellowship with the Dutch. As the conditions of this treaty would be more advantageous to the Spaniards than the Dutch, the former ought to balance it by per-

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mitting the Dutch to export from Guiana, at all times, whether by sea or by land, all the animals necessary for furnishing their markets with provisions, or for the supply of their domestic labours.

For the perfect execution of this treaty, the governments should name reciprocally, commissioners of their respective nations, to reside at the neighbouring seats of government, and every important difficulty should be submitted to the decision of the mother countries.

Expulsion of the Caribs.

So soon as friendship and good faith shall be thus solemnly established between the governments of Surinam and Spanish Guiana, force might be employed in this with a certainty of success. The Caribs, ferocious and brave while supported by the Dutch, will no longer be any thing more than Indians, less pusillanimous than those of the other nations; besides never having had an opportunity of exercising their courage but on unarmed and isolated unfortunates, the aspect of a regular force, new to them, will appear so formidable that the idea of resistance will never occur to them. Flight into their forests, or resignation to social life, will be the only alternatives presented to them.

Three thousand troops of the line would clear, in less than two months, all the circuit bounded by the Oronoko on the north, the river Essequibo on the south, the sea on the east, and the missions of the Catalonian capuchins on the west. After this con-

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quest, which would cost no more than a military procession, it will be necessary to establish and preserve, for the three first years, about ten posts of from fifteen to twenty men each, distributed over the territory newly conquered, in order that agricultural measures should not in their commencement, receive any impediment.

New means of cultivating and peopling Guiana.

The Spanish sovereignty will be no sooner acknowledged and respected, than it will be necessary to turn its attention to employing, in a manner more useful to commerce, the powers of the Indians who live in vices, perfect nullities under the rod of the missionaries. It is time that these pretended exercises of piety, in which all their moments are occupied, should, in a great measure, be replaced by labour; it is time that these miserable beings, abandoned to a sort of life more calculated to degrade than reform mankind, should commence the practice of the social virtues; it is time that they should cease to be automata, and become men; in short, it is time that the misery of the conquered Indians, which cannot but estrange from social life the savage Indians, should give place to ease and comfort. This grand object may easily be accomplished. It needs only that it be willed. The Indians are intemperate, but submissive; indolent, but fearful. Gentleness and threats, judiciously employed, can do every thing on such characters. Let the experiment be but made

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in good earnest, and the success will be seen to exceed the hope.

It is not, however, on this population alone that we ought to reckon for the prosperity of Guiana. The Canary Islands, whose inhabitants, whether from a love of change, or whether from want, have contracted a habit of emigrating in bodies to the different parts of Spanish America; the Canary islands may greatly contribute to immediately people Guiana, and metamorphose this region, now a desert and without cultivation, into a rich and delicious country. It is for the government to make regulations by which these men may find advantages, that would induce them to prefer Guiana to any other Spanish possession, especially for cultivation or trade.

There is another mode, still more infallible, of for ever securing prosperity and happiness to Guiana.—It is to do for her what the King of Spain did in October, 1783, for Trinidad.

The impossibility of desiring any thing more advantageous for Guiana would make me terminate this chapter by expressing the truly sincere wishes I entertain for her prosperity if I had not engaged, at the commencement of this description, to finish it by information, true or false, real or fabulous, that history and local tradition have given me on El Dorado.

El Dorado.

The first conquerors who undertook to unite the province of Venezuela, to the dominions of the Spanish crown, received from the different Indian na-

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tions they pillaged, violated, and massacred, positive and unanimous information, that by marching for a long time south, a region would be found on the banks of a great lake, inhabited by Indians of a peculiar nature, known under the name of Omegas, living under laws deliberately made by themselves, principally in a large city, the buildings of which were covered with silver. That the heads of the government and religion wore, when discharging the duties of their offices, habits of massy gold; that all their instruments, all their utensils, all their furniture were of gold, or at least of silver. That this nation, equally numerous and warlike, kept on foot armies so formidable that no other could resist it, and the principal use it made of its power was to drive off from its territory any individual who was not born within it.

In every part of Venezuela and Cumana, to which the European detachments directed their steps, they received the same accounts, and from Indians too far separated by the distance of their abodes, to have preconcerted this falsehood. It did not appear that even superstition had given any credit to this tradition, for they attributed to the Omegas no supernatural virtue or power.

At Peru, Pizarro and his men received the same information of the existence of the Omegas upon the borders of a lake, situated to the north-east of Peru; this communication accorded also with those of Venezuela, upon the riches of this nation, its power and police.

Quesada, sent from Peru, had scarcely arrived with

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his people at Santa Fe of Bogota, when the Indians, seeing them hungry after gold, apprised them, that there was to the east, a country very remote, inhabited by the Omegas, where gold and silver were the only metals used for every purpose. The Spaniards were so enthusiastic at this news that they named this country, so rich, *El Dorado;* and from this epoch expeditions from all sides, went out in search of El Dorado.

Pedro de Ordaz formed, almost at the same time, from Quito an expedition for the same object, of which he had no more to boast than Pizarro of his.

Antonio Berrio, a contemporary of the preceding, set out from the kingdom of Santa Fe, for the discovery of El Dorado; he found himself very happy in being able, after eight months of ineffectual endeavours, to return with a tenth part of his men.

Francisco Orellana, an enterprising and indefatigable man, was sent with one hundred people, by the viceroy of Peru, to discover El Dorado. He descended the river Amazons, where his own men mutinied, killed him, chose another chief, and encountered other adventures, that caused their total destruction.

But it was from Venezuela that most expeditions were made for El Dorado. Every army, every detachment, directed its march towards the south, hoping that the discovery of a country so renowned would be the termination of its evils. The misfortunes of the first did but excite the desires of the second. All aspired to the honour attached to success, and all found, in the fatigues of the journey, when

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hardly commenced, incurable disorders, blindness, or death.

Among these daring men was Philip of Urra, whose expedition deserves so much the more to be known, as it is the only one to which are owed the ideas that have mostly fed the illusion upon El Dorado.

Expedition of Urra.

The faithful historian Oviedo informs us that Philip of Urra was one of those who formed the first expedition of the Welsers to Venezuela. Less savage than his companions, he did not yield to them in ambition or intrepidity. From his disembarkation at Coro to the period of his death, which comprehends an interval of fifteen years, he did not enjoy a single instant of repose. Always on the march, fighting the Indians, living on wild fruits, exposed to all the inconveniences that multiply themselves in a country in which man had done nothing to correct its insalubrity, or facilitate its communications, his life was a tissue of dangers and misfortunes.

In the course of these expeditions chance led him to a place where he learnt that Quesada, one of the conquerors of Santa Fe, had just passed with two hundred and fifty men and a number of cavalry, in going to discover and seize on El Dorado. This news was true. Quesada marched a long while, suffered much, and discovered nothing. He fell back on Popayan, where he did not arrive till a long time after, and with a considerable loss of men.

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Philip of Urra, knowing nothing but the project of Quesada, and not its result, presumed, on the contrary, that so large an expedition would never have been made without infallible evidence respecting the land of gold, towards which all the Spaniards directed their wishes and turned their views. He determined then to follow the track of Quesada, in order to obtain at the least, a part of the riches of El Dorado, should he arrive too late to share in the conquest.

After many days of labour and incredible fatigues, he arrived in the province of Papamena. He found there an Indian equally distinguished by his rank, and his understanding. Urra communicated to him his plan; the Indian answered with every appearance of good faith, that the direction of his march would conduct him only to uninhabited countries, or deserts, where he would experience hunger and all the horrors with which it is accompanied; that, if he wished, the Indian added, he himself would conduct him to a country where gold and silver were in the greatest abundance; that for this it was necessary only to march to the east to the river Guayuava (at this day the Guariavi, situated not far from the lake of Parima). The Indian even showed some apples and medlars of gold, which his brother had lately brought from thence.

Philip of Urra thought that prudence commanded him to give no credit to this account, but invariably to follow the steps of Quesada. He only took the Indian to guide him by the same road Quesada had pursued; but after eight days, seeing that the most frightful places, the most difficult passages, in a word,

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that no obstacle could change the resolution of Urra, the Indian availed himself of a dark night to save himself, and withdraw among his countrymen.

His flight, and the bad roads, began to make the army murmur against Philip of Urra, whose plans and ideas were constantly the same. All the soldiers complained of his not having followed the advice of the Indian. He alone remained unalterable. A few days after they discovered a mountain resembling that at the foot of which they had been assured the city of El Dorado was built. They had it reconnoitred and were undeceived. They call this mountain the point of *Los Pardaos*. Philip of Urra was obliged to pass the rainy season there, and to suffer the most cruel effects of hunger. Ants and reptiles were the support of this fragment of an army. Many swelled and died in the most excruciating agonies; others lost their hair, eyebrows, eyelashes, nails, &c. As soon as good weather returned, Philip of Urra took the road for Coro, then the capital of Venezuela. He stopped, to let the waters subside at a village called our Lady of Fragoa.

Whilst his people rested themselves, and thought only of the pleasure of arriving at Coro, Philip of Urra, irritated at his disappointment, thought only of making new endeavours to render fortune more propitious. From the informations of the Indians of the country he learnt there was a region inhabited by the Omegas, richer by far than any that had been discovered, but peopled with a warlike and ferocious race. Other Indians called this nation Itaguas, but they all agreed in its topographical situation.

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So much was clearly by no means wanting to rekindle all the desires of Philip of Urra. As soon as the plains were no longer under water, he directed his steps towards the country become the only object of his wishes. His army was reduced to forty men.—The Indians offered to conduct him safely to the banks of the river Guayuava, and they kept their word. He arrived by roads tolerably commodious. He took fresh information. The natives told him that the city of Macatoa, through which he must necessarily pass, was on the other side of the river, which he could not cross without a canoe. One of these Indians appeared to him so sincere, that he commissioned him to go and apprize the inhabitants of the city, that he was there with forty men, on his way to more distant provinces; that he demanded a passage and the friendship of the natives, to whom he offered his own.

The Indian sent by Urra was from a valley neighbouring to Macatoa. He fulfilled his commission so well, that the morning after there arrived in a canoe the son of the cacique, sent by his father to offer, in his turn, his friendship and hospitality to Urra, who accepted both with pleasure. He repaired with his people to the cacique's at Macatoa, with whom he formed the most friendly connexions. The cacique, informed of the motives of the journey of the Spaniards, told them that the country of the Omegas, was, in fact, full of gold and silver, but that its population was so great, and so disciplined to war, that their attempt with so small a body was imprudent, rash, and impracticable. Philip of Urra, whose ob-

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stinacy converted obstacles into encouragements, constantly persisted in his design. The cacique gave him guides as far as the first village, which was at nine days' journey off, and recommendations to the cacique, his friend. The distance was travelled with tolerable comfort, as the roads were well opened and pretty good.

The new cacique received the Spaniards with all the marks of affability and satisfaction. He made to Philip of Urra, as his colleague of Macatoa had done, all the observations possible on the extravagance of the undertaking. He assured him, that all he had been told respecting the Omegas was true; but perhaps they had suffered him to remain in ignorance of the power and information of that people, whom no other had ever attacked with success; that it was consequently ridiculous and contrary to common sense to believe it possible, with forty men, were they lions, to make the conquest of a country, defended by men formidable, as well by their number, as by their knowledge of the art of war. The force and justice of this reasoning made no more impression on Philip of Urra than all he had before heard on the same subject. The cacique, seeing his inflexible obstinacy, added that the country which fatality made him seek, was five days' journey from thence; that he would promise him to conduct him there himself; that he would even participate in his ulterior dangers, did he not, in waging war with the Omegas, hazard the safety and existence of his own nation; that he especially requested of him and his companions in misfortune, to remember, should any one of them escape, the per-

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suasions he had used to divert them from an enterprise in which they had nothing to expect but death. All this was heard with the utmost coldness and indifference. Nothing was talked of but setting out, and the good cacique was accepted as their guide.

After four days march they arrived at the back of a mountain where they perceived four or five villages, surrounded by well cultivated fields; and further off, in a delightful vale, a city so large, that the eye could not embrace its whole extent. The streets appeared laid out on a line, and the houses well built and contiguous. Then said the cacique to Philip of Urra: "I promised to shew you the capital of the Omegas; "my promise is fulfilled. Behold this famous coun- "try, whose riches the Spaniards so ardently covet. "That edifice, which elevates itself in the centre of "the city, is the residence of the governor, and the "temple of a number of gods. The population of "the town is immense, and the order that reigns in "it admirable. Those houses which you see scat- "tered on the sides of the hills around the city, "serve for the habitation of the Omega Indians, "whom the chief destines to the cultivation of pro- "visions for the inhabitants of the city, while the "others exercise alone the trade of war. Now that "you yourself see the importance of the country, it "is for you to reflect anew on the temerity of your "project. If you persist in your design, I am under "the necessity of withdrawing, and offering up, in "spite of their inutility, prayers to the gods to pro- "tect your lives." They took leave of the cacique, and marched to the city.

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On approaching the four or five houses that they had perceived from the top of the mountain, they met on the way the Indian cultivators. Struck at the sight of the Spaniards, white, bearded, and under, to them, a strange dress, they betook themselves to flight. They were ineffectually pursued. It was only Philip of Urra, who, to his misfortune, overtook one. No sooner did the Indian find himself seized, than he disembarrassed himself of his adversary by a blow from his lance, by which Philip of Urra found himself severely wounded between the ribs. An hour had not elapsed, before they heard in the city a great noise of drums, and other instruments of war, mingled with the most frightful cries. Night happily came on to favour the retreat of the Spaniards. They carried off Philip of Urra in a hammoc, and passed the rest of the night on the top of the mountain.

The next morning, at break of day, an army of fifteen thousand Omegas went in pursuit of the Spaniards, who, although reduced by the wound of Philip of Urra to thirty-nine, prepared for battle under the command of Colonel Limpias. Never was a combat more unequal, nor so little fatal to the smaller number. The Spaniards displayed a valour beyond imagination. Not one of them was killed. They repulsed the Omegas, and covered the field of battle with their dead.

They agreed, however, notwithstanding this unhoped for success, that the conquest of the Omegas could not be made, but with forces far more considerable. They fell back on the cacique who had acted as their guide. They there rested themselves a little,

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Philip of Urra was there cured of his wound, and after having obtained from the same cacique all the information necessary for rendering a second journey more rapid and more easy, he departed for Coro, with the intention of forming a new expedition more adapted to the force of the Omegas; but before arriving at Coro he was, with his most faithful adherents, assassinated by the order of the pseudo-governor Carvajal, for the reasons mentioned in Chap. I.

Opinion on El Dorado.

Of all the attempts made for the discovery of El Dorado, no one anterior or posterior, furnishes to history materials less equivocal than that of Philip of Urra. It wants, nevertheless, a great deal for me to regard it, as a proof of the riches and magnificence of the empire of the Omegas, or of El Dorado. It is enough, however, to induce a belief of the existence of a warlike nation, more civilized than the rest of the Indians, who had built, on the borders of the lake of Parima, a large city, handsome, and well constructed in comparison with the miserable hovels of which the disgusting hamlets of the Indians are composed, but in fact, inferior to the most insignificant village of France.

Whatever opinion is adopted, it cannot be maintained by any positive proof, for no European has as yet traversed the country where every relation places El Dorado. The lake of Parima, on the western bank of which it is supposed the capital is situated, is towards the third degree of north latitude, and

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sixty-third degree of longitude, west from the meridian of Paris. It makes a part of Spanish Guiana, at its southern extremity, and not far from the Portuguese, French, and Dutch boundaries. Its great distance from the sea, has preserved its environs from the steel of its conquerors: and the bravery, or if you please, the ferocity, of its inhabitants, forbid every traveller from approaching it. There may then be some settlements of a little consequence, which the imagination of the first conquerors, naturally exalted, might ~~have~~ represented as opulent states; and it is, at once, all that can be admitted; for the European establishments have for a long time been too near, for a nation so polished, so warlike, and so rich, not to have been perceived.

Modern Expedition.

Yet the chimera of exaggeration still finds at this day, and on the very spot, food to perpetuate it. In 1780, a wild Indian presented himself before the governor of Spanish Guiana, saying that he was from the borders of the lake of Parima. As soon as they knew, or thought that they knew his country, he was assailed with questions, to which he answered with as much perspicuity and precision as could be required of a wild Indian, whose most intelligible language consisted in signs. He, however, succeeded in making them understand that there was on the banks of the lake of Parima, a city whose inhabitants were civilized, and regularly disciplined to war. He boasted a great deal on the beauty of its buildings,

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the neatness of its streets, the regularity of its squares, the riches of its people. According to him, the roofs of the principal houses were either of gold or of silver. The high priest, instead of pontifical robes, rubbed his whole body with the fat of the turtle, then they blew upon it some gold dust, so as to cover his whole body with it. In this attire he performed the religious ceremonies. The Indian sketched on a table, with a bit of charcoal, the city of which he had given the description. His ingenuity seduced the governor; he asked him to serve as a guide to some Spaniards he wished to send on this discovery. The Indian consented with the best grace imaginable.

Six Spaniards offered themselves for this undertaking; and among others, Don Antonio Santos.—They set off; they travelled nearly five hundred leagues to the south, through the most frightful roads. Hunger, the swamps, the woods, the precipices, the heats, the rains, destroyed almost all the Spaniards. When those who survived all these inconveniences, thought themselves four or five days' journey from the capital city, and hoped to reach the end of all their troubles and the object of their desires, the Indian disappeared in the night. This event dismayed the Spaniards: they knew not where they were; they wandered about for some time. By degrees they all perished, except Don Antonio Santos, to whom it occurred to disguise himself as an Indian. In fact, he threw aside his cloaths, anointed the whole of his body with *rocou*, and introduced himself among the Indians by means of the knowledge he had of many of their languages. He was a long time among

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them, until at length he fell into the power of the Portuguese, established on the banks of the Rio-Negro. They embarked him on the river Amazons, and after a very long detention, they sent him back to his country. He died in Guiana, in 1796. The accounts of this man would without doubt have been interesting, if his intelligence had been on a par with his firmness in danger. But, naturally limited, his travels and fatigues have been a pure blank to history.

Baron Humboldt, on his re-entry, in 1800, from the Rio-Negro into the Oronoko, wished to penetrate as far as lake Parima; but he was hindered, as I have already said, by the Guaycas, whose height does not exceed four feet two or four inches. It was from them that he learnt that the lake of Parima, or *Dorado*, is of small extent and little depth, and that its banks, as also some islets situated in the lake are of talc. May not the error handed down, of the great riches of this country, be owing to the brilliancy of gold and of silver, which the rays of the sun give to talc, the effect of which is still more striking, and tends far more to the illusion of the spectator who casts his eye over a great extent covered with this fallacious stone? It is probably, not to say infallibly, the source of all the stories that have been related.

THE END.

G. Woodfall, Printer, *Paternoster Row.*

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